

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council



*Michaela Okitkun, Age 11
Kotlik School, Kotlik
2006 Art Contest Entry*

Fisheries Meeting Materials

Oct. 5-6, 2006

Bethel

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DRAFT AGENDA

YUKON-KUSKOWKIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 5-6, 2006

Long House Bethel Inn

751 3rd Avenue – Bethel, Alaska

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day

Evening session may be called by the Chair

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcomed for each agenda item. Please fill out the green comment form or be recognized by the Chair. Public testimony time limits may be given by the Chair to provide opportunity for all to testify and to keep on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: The times for the meeting each day, the order of business, and agenda are estimated and are subject to change without notice. Contact any Office of Subsistence Management staff present at the meeting for the current agenda and meeting schedule.

AREA CONCERNS: The Regional Advisory Council arranges its meetings to hear and understand the subsistence concerns of the area where they meet. Please feel free to share your subsistence concerns and knowledge during the meeting. The agenda is an outline for the meeting and is open to the area's subsistence concerns, whether it is listed or not.

Thursday October 5, 2006 and Friday October 6, 2006

Meeting Agenda 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., or until meeting is concluded

- 1. Call to order** (*Harry Wilde, Chair*)
- 2. Roll call and establishment of quorum** (*Mary Gregory, Secretary*) **5**
- 3. Invocation** (*Local Pastor or Elder*)
- 4. Housekeeping items and announcements** (*Alex Nick*)
- 5. Review and adoption of draft agenda** (*Council*)
- 6. Review and adoption of draft unapproved minutes from February 22-24, 2006**
Council meeting in Emmonak (*Council*) **6**
- 7. Regional Advisory Council concerns and comments** (*Council*)

8. Subsistence fisheries issues

- A. Subsistence fisheries post-season review—Joint Federal/State presentation (*Mike Rearden/John Linderman*)
- B. Deferral of Yukon-Northern Area fisheries proposals (*Don Rivard*)
- C. Alaska Board of Fisheries AYK proposals for Yukon-Kuskokwim—Review and recommendations (*Don Rivard*)
- D. Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association’s stakeholders group progress report
- E. Salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands pollock fishery (*Becca Robbins*)
- F. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
 - 1) Draft 2007 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan (*Cliff Schleusner*) **22**
 - a. Yukon River Region—Council Review and Recommendation..... **28**
 - b. Kuskokwim Region—Council Review and Recommendation **53**
 - 2) Strategic Planning Update
 - 3) Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program
 - a. Yukon Region (*David Waltemyer, Association of Village Council Presidents*)
 - b. Kuskokwim Region (*Eva Patton, Association of Village Council Presidents*)
 - c. Kuskokwim Native Association fisheries program update (*Heather Hildebrand*)

9. Subsistence wildlife issues

- A. WP06-30 public education plan update, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (*Mike Rearden*)
- B. Call for 2007–2008 Federal wildlife proposals (*Alex Nick*)
- C. Customary Trade for Subsistence Foods (*Greg Roczicka*)

10. 805(c) Federal Subsistence Board actions report, Annual Report reply, 2006 Annual Report topics (*Alex Nick*)

- A. 805(c) Federal Subsistence Board wildlife actions report (*Alex Nick*) **72**
- B. 2005 Annual Report reply (*Alex Nick*)..... **82**
- C. 2006 Annual Report topics (*Alex Nick*)

11. Agency/organization reports

A. Office of Subsistence Management

- 1) Call for comments on proposed rule for Rural Determinations (*Action Item*) **86**
- 2) Update on Council composition (*Staff*) **97**
- 3) Updates on Closure Reviews, Subsistence Use Amounts, and Customary and Traditional Use Determinations policies (*Staff*) **98**
- 4) Update on the Kenai Subsistence Resource Region and Council (*handout*)
- 5) Southeast Council's draft petition to the Secretaries concerning hunting licenses (*Action Item, Don Rivard*) **99**
- 6) Update on avian bird flu (*Handout*)

B. National Wildlife Refuges

- 1) Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
- 2) Togiak National Wildlife Refuge **108**

C. Alaska Department of Fish and Game

D. Association of Village Council Presidents

E. Tribal representatives

F. Municipal government representatives

G. ANCSA Village Corporation representatives

H. Other organizations

12. Regional Council business

A. Review of Council charter (*Alex Nick*) **114**

B. Election of officers

- a. Chair
- b. Vice chair
- c. Secretary

C. Appointments

- 1) Lower Yukon River CFC members
- 2) Lower Kuskokwim River CFC members

- D. Confirm next meeting on March 15-16, 2007 in Hooper Bay (*Alex Nick*)..... 117
 - E. Determine date and place for fall 2007 fisheries meeting (*Alex Nick*)..... 118
- 13. Closing Comments** (*Council*)
- 14. Adjourn** (*Chair*)

For more information, contact Alex Nick, Regional Council Coordinator at 907-543-1037, 1-800-621-5804 ext. 257, by fax at 907-543-4413, or by email at alex_nick@fws.gov.

Special accommodations for persons with disabilities: Special accommodation for persons with disabilities may be arranged by contacting the Regional Council Coordinator at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Teleconferencing is available upon request. You may call the Regional Council Coordinator (see telephone numbers above) at least 72 hours prior to the start of the Council meeting to receive this service. Please notify the Regional Council Coordinator which agenda topic interests you and whether you wish to testify and which agenda item(s) you plan to testify.

REGION 5
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Membership Roster

Seat	Yr Apptd Term Expires	Member Name & Address
1	2004 2007	James A. Charles Tuntutuliak
2		Vacant
3	2007	Raymond Oney Alakanuk
4	2004 2007	William F. Brown Eek
5	2005 2008	Harry Wilde, Sr. Chair Mt. Village
6	2005 2008	Edgar P. Hoelscher Hooper Bay
7	2005 2008	Mary Gregory Secretary Bethel
8	2005 2008	Philip Moses Toksook Bay
9	2005 2008	Lester Wilde, Sr. Hooper Bay
10	2003 2006	Joseph P. Mike Kotlik
11	2003 2006	Greg J. Roczicka Bethel
12	2003 2006	Bob Aloysius Kalskag
13	2003 2006	Beverly Hoffman Bethel

Unapproved Minutes from February 22–24, 2006

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
City of Emmonak Complex
Emmonak, Alaska

Call to Order—Meeting was called to order by Harry Wilde, Chair at 9:05 A.M.

Roll Call

Members present: Harry Wilde, Sr., Mt. Village; Mary Gregory, Bethel; Lester Wilde, Hooper Bay; Phillip Moses, Toksook Bay; Edgar P. Hoelscher, Hooper Bay; Bob Aloysius, Kalskag; William F. Brown, Eek; Joseph P. Mike, Kotlik

Members absent: Greg J. Roczicka, Bethel (excused); Beverly Hoffman, Bethel (excused); James A. Charles, Tuntutuliak (excused)

Note: Willard D. Church resigned prior to the meeting

Invocation: Invocation was given by elder Phillip Moses

Meeting participants: Alex Nick, OSM; Tom Kron, OSM; Karen Hyer, FIS; Steve Kessler, NPS, Andrew Kelly, Sr. RIT,USFWS; Pete DeMatteo, OSM (online); Don Rivard, OSM (online); Warren Easland, BIA ; John Hilsinger, ADF&G; Timothy Andrew, AVCP; David Waltmeyer, AVCP Partners Program(Yukon); Eva Patton, AVCP Partners Program (Kuskokwim); Hollis Twitchell, Yukon Delta NWR; Robert Sundown, Yukon Delta NWR; Salena Hile, Court Reporter; Sophie Evan, Interpreter; Joseph “Trim” Nick, Interpreter; Nicholas C. Tucker, Sr., Emmonak; Edward Andrew, Emmonak; Peter Andrew, Emmonak; John Lamont, Emmonak; Raymond Waska, Sr., Emmonak; Ted Hamilton, Emmonak; Wilbur Hootch, Emmonak; Paul Manumik, Sr., Nunam Iqua; Ben Tucker, Emmonak; Herman Hootch, Emmonak; Stella Unok, Kotlik; Mary Agnes Uisok, Emmonak; Mary Ann Miller, Kotlik; Jeff Reeves, Alakanuk; Gerald Maschmann, USFWS, Fairbanks; Billy Charles, Emmonak; Fortuna Manumik, Emmonak; Stan Jimmy, Emmonak; Robert Moore, Emmonak; Peter Moore, Emmonak; Martin B. Moore, Emmonak; Evan Rivers, John Kelly

Review and Adoption of Draft Agenda:

After discussions of the agenda, Council added “2006 Yukon-River–Initial Discussions on Salmon Returns” as Item 10 (D).

Bob Aloysius recommended that, for the next Council meeting, “Housekeeping items and announcements” should be placed on the agenda before “Review and Adoption of the Draft Agenda” because it seems it is appropriate to do so.

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Edgar Hoelscher to adopt agenda as revised. Motion carried.

Review and Adoption of the Meeting Minutes from October 13–14, 2005

After a brief discussion, the Council adopted the minutes (motion by Bob Aloysius, second by Lester Wilde).

Regional Advisory Council Concerns and Comments

- Council agenda should be made available to all of the village tribal councils, city governments, and ANCSA village corporations because they are complaining they are being left out on fish and wildlife issues and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge issues. They expressed their concerns about Council members having to do some extra work disseminating information to the villages when they are asked to do so by people they represent. One emerging issue is that younger generations do not wish to volunteer their services because they don't want to leave their current jobs and lose out on their important income. They are aware that Councils do not get compensated for their voluntary services.
- Council member questioned why St. Mary's village representatives, who presented an incident during the fall meeting in October 2005, did not report back to the Council as planned during this meeting.
- Bethel is one of the hub communities within the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council. Meetings should be held in Bethel because it is readily accessible by all of the villages within the Delta.
- Council represents the lower Yukon River people on the important issues and they bring those issues to the Federal Subsistence Board. Council should do everything possible to continue making a very strong stand and not be overridden by the Federal Subsistence Board. Don't let the Federal Subsistence Board or staff take advantage of you as a Council, by stating that they support a certain proposal (This comment was made by one of the meeting attendees who was recognized by a Council member to speak).
- In other organization meetings, cash advances are given to avoid problems with cashing member's per diem checks. The Council should be given cash instead of checks when a meeting is held in a village because it is difficult to cash checks in most of the villages.

Housekeeping and Announcements

Alex Nick informed the Council and audience that it has been a trying time to prepare for the RAC meetings as OSM staff made preparations for all of the 10 Council winter meetings. Most of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council members were contacted regarding their attendance plans several times before this meeting. There are some minor problems on the teleconferencing connections for this meeting. Alex informed the Council that breakfast and lunch have been arranged at the local school cafeteria, and that a receipt book is available if Council members need to get some receipts for their travel expenses. Council needs to be conservative on the available snack items, as supply needs to last for a three-day Council meeting.

Federal 2006–2007 Wildlife Proposals

WP06-01: *Restrict the commercial sales and purchase of handicrafts made from bear claws*

Summary of public comments:

- Support the status quo because this proposal continues to protect customary and traditional uses of bear anywhere

After listening to the analysis of the proposal and public comments on WP06-01, the Council deliberated and took the following action:

Lester Wilde proposed inserting the word "Federally-qualified" in the proposed regulations to read: ".25(j)8(a) Federal qualified users may not sell handicrafts made from the claws of

a black or brown bear to an entity operating as a business as defined in the Alaska Statutes 43.70.110(1), unless the bear was taken in Units 1-5.”

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Bob Aloysius to support proposal WP06-01 as written. Vote: 8 for, 0 against, 0 abstaining

Justification: Council honors the beliefs and culture of the indigenous people from other parts of Alaska. Bear claws are used for handicraft and skin sewing and in this area as decorations for the skin sewn handicrafts. There is a desire to maintain traditional sales opportunity, while preventing commercialization of sales. There is a desire to be able to display handicrafts in village stores for sale by the person that produced the handicraft. However, some felt that there is no clear definition on what the proposed regulation would do.

WP06-02: *Allow the sale of handicrafts made from non-edible byproducts of most wildlife*

Summary of public comments Council heard before deliberation:

- What defines “subsistence qualification”?
- Support the proposal in order to make it possible that handicraft items made from nonedible byproducts of wildlife.
- Concerned about potential commercialization of handicrafts. Suggest monitoring sales to identify individuals who are Federally-qualified through a system such as tagging items to be sold when the new rule is implemented.
- How are Native-made handicrafts protected currently? Rules are now emerging to limit handicrafts to the point that a subsistence harvester, when s/he makes artifacts, is labeled as a poacher that destroys a person’s traditional ways.

After listening to the public comments, the Council deliberated and took the following action:

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, and Mary Gregory seconded to support WP06-02 without modification. Vote: 5 for, 0 against, and 3 abstaining

Justification: This would allow subsistence users to continue their traditional practices.

WP06-27: *Establish a control use area for moose in Unit 18*

Summary of public comments:

- Witnessed some people spotting a moose using aircrafts and VHF radios and this is not appreciated by local people. Locals would like to see some control on aircrafts in the area during moose season. As this type of activity is witnessed, locals feel that there is an unfair advantage on locals by privately-owned aircraft operators who spots a moose to harvest.
- Been approached by local people that they do not appreciate aircrafts being used for spotting a moose, assisting in the hunt, and hunting a moose later in the day or next day.

- Support Control Use Area if that's what the intent of this proposal is.
- Privately-owned aircrafts are being used to spot a moose in the area. Local people don't have any privately-owned aircrafts to do the same. Gasoline and food are expensive and for that reason, locals supports this proposal
- Heard many different aircraft pilots that announce they've spotted a moose and those pilots have entered the locations of moose spotted on their GPS coordinates to share. This is the reason why I support this proposal
- Very young hunters are currently being taught how they could harvest moose in the area. Because this is the mainstay of the local people.

After Council listened intensively to the public comments, the Council deliberated and took the following action:

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Edgar Hoelscher to support Proposal WP06-27 without modification Vote: 8 voting for, 0 against, 0 abstaining

Justification: There are local concerns about aerial moose spotting in lower Yukon River portion of Unit 18. Residents within the proposed area feel that spotting a moose from an aircraft creates an unfair advantage over other rural users who do not practice the same method for locating a moose during the moose season. Subsistence users in the area travel by land and water to hunt; and spotting a moose by use of an aircraft will not be fair for those traveling by land and water to harvest moose. We need to maintain the abundance of moose in this area by restricting aircraft access to hunt.

WP06-28/29: *Replace 10-day announced winter season with a 20-day season and allow the harvest of calves during the winter season in the lower Yukon area*

Summary of public comments:

- Local Fish and Game Advisory Committee previously discussed the issue of calves in the area a number of times, and local people's understanding is that a calf is considered to be a calf as long as it is with a cow moose. A calf which is less than 12 month old is not worth harvesting for subsistence. Calf is understood by local people to be any animal that is still with its mother.
- A person from the area was cited for harvesting a calf due to the definition of a calf in the State regulations.
- Support the proposal mainly for need for the resource because in the past, due to low levels of water in the sloughs, there were just a small area for moose hunting opportunity last year.
- Support taking of calves only in winter season, not in fall season.
- If possible, change the definition of calf because in the summer time, up to three calves are seen with a cow moose in the area.
- Predators such as wolves and brown and black bear are not devastating moose populations in the area because wolves and bears are rare. Calf population is currently healthy in the area.

- Because certain number of moose cow keeps its calves up to 1-2 years, it is noticeable that certain calves are less than a year old and these animals are pretty small. Local people complain that a calf meat is slimy when eaten, for this reason, it is recommended that a definition for calf be changed to clarify the current definition for a calf.
- Support proposals 28 & 29 except the definitions for a “calf”. There is a need to better define the word “moose calf because a number of moose hunters cannot distinguish what a calf is the way it is currently defined. There is a need to educate local moose hunters on this issue. A number of moose hunters do respect these animals and they are concerned about moose calves.
- Will harvesting moose calves have a long-range effect on moose population in the area?
- Would like to see a better definition on calf so any moose hunter will not get into trouble with the law enforcement personnel in the field.

After listening to the extensive public comments, the Council deliberated and concluded with the following action:

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Lester Wilde to support proposals WP06-28/29 with modification. “Calf” is defined as an ungulate still with its mother. Regulatory wording should add “with its mother” after the word “calf”. Vote: 6 for, 0 against, 0 abstaining, 1 absent

Justification: Calf harvest is not customary and traditional in the proposed area. There are concerns about the definition of a calf. It is good to provide additional opportunity for the lower Yukon River subsistence hunters to feed their families.

WP06-30: *Remove the closure of Federal public lands for the fall moose season in portions of Unit 18*

Summary of public comments:

- Association of the Village Council Presidents (AVCP) supports the deferral of this proposal.
- Emmonak Tribal Council’s resolution is in opposition to the proposal as it was read into record by a tribal member.
- Lower Yukon River residents asked to have a moose moratorium in the past to allow moose populations grow. ADF&G did not ask the Lower Yukon residents that they should establish moose moratorium. There are approximately 800 plus current residents of Emmonak alone. Some of the young men from Emmonak were cited and have gone to jail just for trying to feed their families while harvesting moose.
- There currently exists a corporate land use agreement between the villages of Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, and Emmonak. This agreement allows local residents of these villages to harvest fish and game without restrictions by landowners.
- Recommend that this Council vote this proposal down for these reasons, everything the State and Federal agencies claim is not always correct, in terms of scientific information.

- Local people are being offended by anyone who says that they represents the residents of this area, and yet they have failed to meet with the local people on the issues before they've gone forward to take care of the issues and make decisions.
- 200 plus moose in the area looks good for the State and Federal agencies, but these numbers are not sufficient to feed all of the families affected in villages of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, and Kotlik.
- It is inappropriate that other villages that have used the resources in certain areas that do not have C&T in that area.
- Government needs to work with the local people, as agency staff lacks sufficient knowledge about the local issues.
- Last year, during the whole month of September, moose hunting was devastated, due to weather conditions that hampered moose hunting in the area. As a result of that, some people did not harvest any moose at all.
- Moose hunting is very sensitive in this area.
- Same mistake using this proposal is happening and as an example, an agreement was made by the past U.S./Canada negotiation team on the Yukon River salmon issues that were negotiated at that time. Noticing the same mistake now when this proposal was submitted by the proponent.
- Commercial fishing closely ties with the subsistence hunting and fishing activities in the area.
- Some local people have apologized that, although they wish to attend the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting at this time, they understood that a sport hunting issue is going to be taken up during this meeting. Because sport hunting and fishing is contrary to subsistence, those people decided not to attend this meeting to avoid dealing with controversial issue.
- This proposal is likened to a "key" that will open up future sport activities in the area. It is also inappropriate to mention rural communities such as community of St. Michaels and or other communities that do not have a C&T to harvest fish and wildlife resources. Community relations are linked between some of these communities that were mentioned in the Federal regulatory booklets that there are no C&T for these communities. People in St. Michaels, Stebbins, Mt. Village. St. Mary's, and Pilot Station are closely related, and harvest resources in other areas then their local area.
- One user personally encountered enforcement personnel when he was only checking his blackfish trap. An enforcement officer demanded that he stop. When he stopped, the officer demanded to check on his cargo sled and found only blackfish.
- Previous census indicates that Emmonak had 187 households in the past, and currently Emmonak households total over 200. Subsistence hunting and fishing is needed in Emmonak because there are other sources that could be harvested to feed some families.

- Why is the proponent not present at this meeting to explain why he proposed to allow sport hunting in the area and to try to convince local people the reasons why he submitted this proposal?
- There is room for other hunters in the area, but the local population of moose is still growing in the area and is not quite at a comfortable level in terms of its population.

The Council listened to very extensive public comments from the local residents that traveled to Emmonak and attended the Council meeting. The Council carefully considered local public comments in its deliberations, then took the following action.

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Mary Gregory to support proposal WP06-30 without modification. Vote: 0 for, 8 against, 0 abstaining. Motion failed.

Justification: Council needs to listen to the elders. Many people from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in the lower Yukon area have expressed concerns about this proposal. People in the lower Yukon shares their harvests of animals with others. There is a concern that the needs of the lower Yukon villages are not being met. There are concerns about changing environment and the stability of the moose population in the proposed area. There are concerns about the people of the lower Yukon being able to get enough moose to feed their families into future generations.

WP06-34: *Extend the moose seasons in Units 21A, 21B, 21D, 21E, & 24*

Council listened to the analysis of the proposal. There were no public comments heard on the proposal. Council deliberated and took the following action.

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Lester Wilde to support WP06-34 without modification. Vote: 0 for, 7 against, 1 absent. Motion failed.

Justification: The Yukon-Innoko Moose Management Working Group opposed this proposal at its meeting. The Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross Local Fish and Game Advisory Committee did not support this proposal at its meeting.

WP06-37: *Change the season dates for caribou in Units 22B and 22D*

After listening to the analysis of the proposal, Council asked for public comments and there were none. The Council deliberated on the proposal and the took the following action.

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Edgar Hoelscher to support WP06-37 without modification. Vote: 8 for, 0 against, 0 abstaining. Motion passed.

Justification: Hunters from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta do not hunt within this area until after Oct. 1. There is broad support for this proposal.

WP06-42 to 52: *Customary and traditional use determinations for beaver, Arctic fox, red fox, hare, lynx, marten, wolverine, spruce grouse, ptarmigan (rock and willow), ground squirrel, and porcupine.*

The Council listened to the analysis of the proposal. There were no public comments heard. The Council discussed and deliberated on the proposal, then took the following action.

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Bob Aloysius to defer proposals WP06-42 to 52 until further information on the use of resources from the lower Yukon River is obtained. Vote: 8 for, 0 against, 0 abstaining. Motion passed.

Justification: Hunters from this area do utilize these species in the Seward Peninsula area. There is a need to gather more information from the affected communities on this issue before Council makes a decision. The Council supports the Preliminary Staff Conclusion to defer these proposals.

Subsistence Fish and Wildlife Issues

Fisheries Information Services

Ms. Karen Hyer with the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Fisheries Information Services, presented annual project report for OSM Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for the Kuskokwim River and Yukon River. Ms. Hyer handed out print outs of her presentation. (See page 149, line 40 of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting transcripts for Ms. Hyer's detailed report).

AVCP Fisheries Partner's Program

David Waltmeyer presented and explained the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) Partner's Program for the lower Yukon River. The program provides funding for fisheries issues identified by the Regional Advisory Councils. (See detailed report in the meeting transcripts on page 161, line 36).

Ms. Eva Patton presented AVCP Partner's Program for the lower Kuskokwim. Ms. Patton explained that the program is a program within the communities in participating more fully in subsistence fisheries management. Ms. Patton calls the program a work in progress because their work is based on the desires of the community. (See meeting transcripts page 163, line 38 for detailed presentation).

Results of Federal Subsistence Board Actions

Alex Nick presented the Federal Subsistence Board actions on 2005 Federal fisheries regulatory change proposals during its January 2006 meeting. Alex Nick explained that some of the documents did not meet the deadlines for the YK meeting booklet production. Alex Nick read into record, the Federal Subsistence Board Actions from January 2006 FSB meeting.

Call for Fisheries Proposals

Alex Nick presented the fisheries proposal information using a sample form as a visual aid. Alex Nick explained the fisheries proposal process is from January 4, 2006 through March 24, 2006. The proposed fisheries regulatory changes would be for 2007-2008 regulatory year. Fisheries proposal forms are available at the meeting information table.

Annual Reports

- Alex Nick presented a draft 2005 annual report and explained that he attempted to work with some of the Council members like Mr. Greg Roczicka, Ms. Beverly Hoffman, and Mr. Lester Wilde while he worked on the draft 2005 annual report. After a discussion of the annual report issues, the Council decided to review the document after meeting recess for the day and revise the document when it comes back in session the next day.

When the annual report was brought back on the table, the Council discussed their concerns about the issues, and made some suggested changes to the draft document.

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Joseph Mike to adopt 2005 Draft Annual Report with the revisions. Motion carried.

Agency Reports

Review of Rural Determinations Briefing

Tom Kron with the OSM presented rural determination briefing and explained that Councils will be asked to make recommendations on rural determinations during its fall meeting. Kron inform the Council that this is just an update on what is currently being done, and that the Federal Subsistence Board met in December 2005 and generated the list. The Board asked for additional work on the list to be done.

Summary of Council comment

- Need clarification on what the Council is expected to do with this.

Kron explained that this briefing is just information for the Council.

Draft Closure Review Policy Briefing

Tom Kron presented the draft closure policy review and referred the Council to pages 114 and 115 of the Council book. Kron informed the Council that comments on the draft closure policy is requested from the Council.

Summary of Council comments

- Will comments be forwarded to Tom Kron or Alex Nick?
- It is frustrating because the document was received just last week and that the Council did not have sufficient opportunity to review the document.
- What is the timeline for the draft policy?

Summary of public questions/comments

- What type of criteria is being used to close for non-Federally-qualified users?
- What instruments are used for closures, such as special action requests, regulatory change proposals?

- As opposed to the regulations changes, does this require public comments or, will emailed comments suffice?
- Need to have a stronger language on the document to protect subsistence users in some areas.

Subsistence Use Amounts Protocol Briefing

Warren Eastland of BIA and John Hilsinger of ADF&G presented the subsistence use amounts briefing (See meeting transcripts on page 204 for details).

Summary of Council comments/questions

- Where did ADF&G obtain these numbers from? Are these figures being used for the customary and traditional use of the game population levels?
- This document says that in Unit 18, the amounts necessary for moose is 80-100 and that is asinine. All of the figures in the document appear to be outdated. How did ADF&G come up with these figures?
- In Unit 18, these figures are way off and because of this, it makes one wonder about the accuracy of these figures. Do our people have to live with these figures in the future?
- When conservation units get into subsistence, subsistence will always be subsistence. Now getting all fed up with the garbage placed on the Council table. All these years, subsistence is being used as an example for nothing. People can't even subsist at any time they wish on their own privately-owned lands. These documents being presented are fit only to be used as a fire-starter.
- These figures now being presented, are these figures being used to determine what is necessary to be determined for the future?
- How did the U.S. Fish and Wildlife or ADF&G come up with these figures in the first place?
- Councils need to make certain that the figures for amounts necessary for subsistence represent most accurate figures. If it becomes necessary, a door-to-door survey in each affected village needs to be conducted to come up with the most accurate figures.
- This information is based on the customary and traditional uses. Is this aligned with the Federal open season, or is it based on the state's customary and traditional use determination data?
- Aside from the door-to-door survey to be conducted, how is the additional information going to be gathered? For example, information on subsistence harvested moose? Department should not allow its staff to report on moose issues if the Department's staff reporting lacks information. Instead, the Department should send someone who is capable of answering Council's questions, so that the Council will make the right decisions
- Proposal WP06-30 was a very premature and dangerous tool. 80-100 moose gives a go-ahead for the Federal government to open up the Unit 18 for other uses on Federal public lands, and this is very, very dangerous. That is the reason why the numbers presented for ANS are unreliable.

- Stress that if the Office of Subsistence Management plans to take part in this issue, that OSM must obtain its own figures and not rely on figures provided by the ADF&G.
- Regional Advisory Councils should support what subsistence users want. Although the general public, from rural areas, have not provided any public comments, the audience at this meeting should be given opportunity to provide their own comments on this issue.
- If this issue was not presented, it would have slipped by the Councils without being noticed by them.

Summary of public comments/questions

- Surprised at the 80-100 moose as the amounts necessary for subsistence as presented; that amount is way off (too low) for Unit 18.
- If that is what's going to be the basis of the decision-making process, it would be irrelevant. Do the ANS/SUA findings limit future harvests? The answer may be no, but when other user groups offers some money, the next thing the subsistence users will find out about is that subsistence harvest for the resource is being closed. How much of a fight do agencies want?
- If Unit 18 is totally under the state management system, moose populations would already have dropped under 100 and Unit 18 would have a Tier II situation in place by now. If the amounts needed for subsistence is that artificially low, how then will the harvestable surplus in the thousands will be used in Unit 18? If Unit 18's entire amounts needed for subsistence is that low, why is the Lower Kuskokwim Moose Moratorium in place now? These are some of the pretty serious questions that come out of the current amounts needed for subsistence document. It is frightening to see moose population levels get as low as 80-100 moose elsewhere in the State. It would do considerable harm to continue and allow moose hunting until its population is low which would lead to initiating a Tier II hunt. If Unit 18 is under the state management system, then all user groups would qualify to hunt moose under the Tier II system and moose populations would be lower.
- In the 1980s, moose population level was very low in Unit 18. Assume that the ADF&G is using moose harvest data from the 1980s to determine amounts needed for subsistence. Not certain about this, but perhaps the ADF&G is proposing these low amounts needed for subsistence in order to arrive at higher harvestable surplus for other user's opportunity to participate in the hunt.

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Joseph Mike, that the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council disagree with all of the numbers in the SUA document; that the protocol be deferred until all ten of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils review and revises the ANS numbers for each Unit.

Discussion: Council directed OSM staff to draft a proposal to the State and Federal agencies to conduct necessary survey to arrive at the correct numbers for Amounts Needed for Subsistence in Unit 18.

Vote: Unanimous consensus.

Justification: The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council disagrees with numbers in the current Amounts Needed for Subsistence document that appears to be incorrect for this region. This document from the ADF&G in Unit 18, ANS for moose 80-100, is far below ANS for

moose because there are at least 2,000 households eligible for subsistence harvest of moose in Unit 18. These numbers are unreal for Unit 18, while in Unit 19D, where moose population is much less than Unit 18, 400-700 is needed for subsistence in that area. A letter to the Board of Game explaining the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's position for Unit 18 moose ANS for subsistence need to be drafted by staff for Council review.

NOTE: A large portion of Yup'ik discussions on ANS was not translated into English. Regional Council Coordinator and OSM staff did their best to incorporate Council concerns and comments into the minutes.

Marine Jurisdiction Briefing

Tom Kron presented briefing on marine jurisdiction and explained that marine jurisdiction was presented to the Councils the past couple of years a number of times. The final rule was published in December 2005. This presentation is informational and this is just an update.

Avian Influenza Update

Tom Kron presented Avian Influenza and referred to pages 146 and 147 in the Council meeting booklet. Kron informed the Council that this is informational and that bird sampling is being planned for this spring and summer.

Summary of public comments

- People in Nunam Iqua, especially younger people in the village, are currently refusing to participate in the upcoming migratory waterfowl hunt this Spring, because of the bird flu media coverage. It has been in the news several times displaying piles of birds being burned up somewhere. Recommend that this document be made available to the household families in the Delta through mail. There is a recommendation to cook birds at 155 degrees, and up to 165 degrees to kill the disease in the meat. This information should be disseminated to the families in the communities because they are concerned about the avian flu. What is currently being done by AVCP and ADF&G to keep public informed about this?
- At the 2005 Fall AVCP Convention, resolutions were adopted to go forward to the Alaska Federation of Natives so that the Native community across the State get involved in research projects and to disseminate this information to the villages.
- There is substantial concern about this issue because most of the Yup'ik elders like to eat medium rare waterfowl birds and, in the coastal villages, people harvest the shorebirds for subsistence use.
- Refuge Information Technicians (RITs) received an extensive training and they will be disseminating this information to the villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region.
- In the Tuluksak area, people also harvests swan
- Is the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) involved in public education on avian flu?

Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Update

Hollis Twitchell and Robert Sundown gave an update on the Refuge programs and activities. Sundown and Twitchell updated the Council on the three main topics.

1. Mulchatna Herd Caribou population has faced a drastic decrease in its population numbers. Currently there are no studies going on to find out why there is a decrease in caribou population numbers.
2. The Lower Kuskokwim Moose Moratorium preliminary studies indicated that there is a drastic increase in moose population numbers in Kwethluk River, and between Three Step Mountain and Elbow Mountain south of the Kuskokwim River.
3. Avian Flu: The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge is currently participating in a large sampling from the waterfowl bird droppings to determine whether or not the waterfowl birds are affected by avian flu.

Togiak Refuge Update

Alex Nick informed the Council that as before, the Togiak Refuge staff provided an update for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council winter meeting. The Togiak Refuge provided an Information Bulletin, which can be found on page 148 of Council book.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

John Hilsinger of ADF&G reported on the salmon escapement goals along with the public involvement to review the escapement goals for the Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim. Organizations involved in the process are: AVCP, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kawerak, Bering Sea Fisherman's Association, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Preliminary recommendations will be available by March 10, 2006. This is being done in preparation for the January 2007 Board of Fisheries meeting. The review process will continue until the start of the Board meeting in 2007.

Association of Village Council Presidents

Timothy Andrew, Director of AVCP Natural Resources reported that Avian Flu was one of the topics he plans to report on, but this was covered the previous day. Mr. Andrew said AVCP is continuously involved on Unit 19A moose issues, because the lower Kuskokwim moose hunters participate in the hunt. The Board of Game made regulatory changes just recently which will affect moose hunters from the lower Kuskokwim area. Under the new State hunting regulations in Unit 19A, moose hunters could be penalized in the future if they don't return their harvest tickets. The issue is not only within 19A Unit, issue also applies to Unit 21E where Bob Aloysius is involved in the moose management planning meetings. AVCP submitted a proposal to allow a winter season in Unit 21E to open concurrently with Unit 18 from December 10 – January 10. AVCP continues to advocate for the subsistence hunters in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta regardless whether or not some of the villages do participate on the AVCP Compact Program. AVCP is involved in the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council at which Myron Naneng is a member of. The Waterfowl Conservation Committee (WCC) receives grants to conduct at least two meetings per year and they deal with the migratory bird issues. At the recent WCC meeting, avian flu was one of the major topics of their discussion. There are other issues such as Black Brant that is experiencing some decline in its population numbers. The Emperor Goose is not rebounding in its population numbers. Cackling Canada Geese is currently stable in their numbers. There are still some problems with the Spectacled Eiders. The WCC also is funded to travel to Washington D.C. and address some of the migratory waterfowl hunting issues that involve the State waterfowl hunting requirements.

Tribal Representatives

Some tribal governments were represented and provided their comments.

ANCSA Village Corporations

Harry Wilde spoke as an ANCSA Corporation representative for his village of Mt. Village and stated that the ANCSA Village Corporations are beginning to get concerned about their land holdings and management of the resources. Their main concern is that the ANCSA village lands are being managed by the state and co-managed by the Federal agencies. Mr. Wilde believes that someday, the ANCSA corporations will get their acts together and do something about the land management issues relating to resources. Wilde mentioned that there seems to be some pre-planning going on between landowners, as to what the land-owners in lower Yukon River should do in the future.

Regional Council Business

Review of the Council Charter

Alex Nick explained that the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council made some suggestions to make changes in its Council charter. The new Council charter is now in place and is in the Council meeting booklet, page 153. This new charter comes from the Secretary of Interior and the Council needs to comply with it.

Tom Kron also explained some of the changes in the charter. One of the changes, the ethics disclosures, is only going to be used if a Council member has significant financial interest on any agenda item. The solicitors reviewed this and stated that it is unnecessary for most of the Council members. If a given Council member feels that he/she have a conflict of interest with any proposal or an issue, he/she should make that known to the Council. This document is just to update the Council for their information. The Council asked about the procedures for resignation from Council membership which is not in the new Charter. The Council is concerned that there should be a section addressing Council resignations. Tom Kron explained that it is up to a Council member wishing to resign, to do so as others have done across the State in the past.

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Joseph Mike that a section be included to the Council Charters on voluntary Council resignations including personal or other reasons for their resignations.

Discussion: Council asked its staff to draft a language for the recommended addition to the Council Charters. Motion carried.

Meeting dates and locations

Motion: Lester Wilde moved, seconded by Bob Aloysius to hold the next Council meeting on October 5-6, 2006 in Bethel, Alaska. Motion passed by voice vote.

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Joseph Mike, to hold 2007 winter meeting on March 15-16, 2007 in Hooper Bay, Alaska. Motion passed by voice vote.

Justification: The Yukon-Kuskowkim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council has met in the month of February and they've experienced some bad weather during travel. Meeting in the month of March would avoid some of this bad weather.

Election of Officers:

At the call of the Chair, and with Council's concurrence, the election of Council officers was moved to fall 2006 meeting.

Closing Comments

- Thanking local people in Emmonak for welcoming Council and its guests to this community, and for treating everyone good while the guests remain in the community. One of the topics learned was the Avian Flu issue. This is very important and this Avian Flu information should be disseminated in the village bingo activities because that is one of the best ways public relations is done in a village like in village of Kotlik.
- Concerned about staying on the subject with an approved agenda during the Council meetings. It is not appropriate to keep suspending the rules to allow someone else to speak and to bump out other agencies on certain topics.
- Do mention the traditional knowledge of the resources especially in relation to fishery. Indigenous people consume their harvests no matter how long the resources were kept in storage or were processed. Some of the resources are usually freshly-caught like fish, some of which would be cured, cooked, and these are usually consumed with respect to the resources, especially the fishery resources. Do encourage that people do not play with fish. Our region has a separate fishery harvest areas that differs from sub-region to sub-region. For example, in the coastal areas, fishery harvest areas are different than that of the lower Yukon River or Kuskokwim sub-regions. Do observe and listen to a lot of concerns on fisheries issues. Although the English language is not understood except through the interpreters in summary, it is different in this day and age as opposed to the past. Yup'ik people did not hold any meetings regarding subsistence resources. Verbal advice of the Yup'ik elders, on the use of the resources was a way to instruct local users how subsistence resources, should be conserved from the area to another area.
- Thanking people of Emmonak for attending this meeting and for bringing up issues the Council is not aware of and for being part of decision-making process for resources that are important to their livelihood. Personal complaint is that, anytime an individual, organization, or an agency wishes to make a presentation, they should place the topic on the agenda and provide a written material in advance for the Council to review before the start of the Council meeting. If a presenter chooses to request a presentation at the last minute, that presenter should provide their materials or documents to the Council. The main thing is to send their materials in advance so the document could be included in the Council meeting booklet for Council review before the Council meeting occurs.
- It is heartwarming to see local people attending the meeting and participate on Council discussions and deliberations on the regulatory changes. The Council would appreciate it if the staff would write the rules and conduct to follow during Council meetings. During Council meetings, staff should remind the Council to follow the current rules that apply to Council meeting. As it was suggested by Ray Waska earlier, each topic should include an explanation of what it is when it is introduced, so the audience could understand and follow the issue. The Council should ask its staff to draft a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board and address issues such as Amounts Needed for Subsistence on moose in Unit 18. The ANS document asks for 80-100 moose for over 2000 households in Unit 18. When the Council returns home with a concern

on Avian Flu, they should make certain that, when the migratory birds are being prepared for a dinner, the birds are fully cooked before they are eaten.

- Is it possible to use a Power Point projector during Council meetings to project the issues being discussed?

Adjournment

Motion: Bob Aloysius moved, seconded by Lester Wilde to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Consensus

Meeting was adjourned on February 24, 2006 at 12:05 p.m.

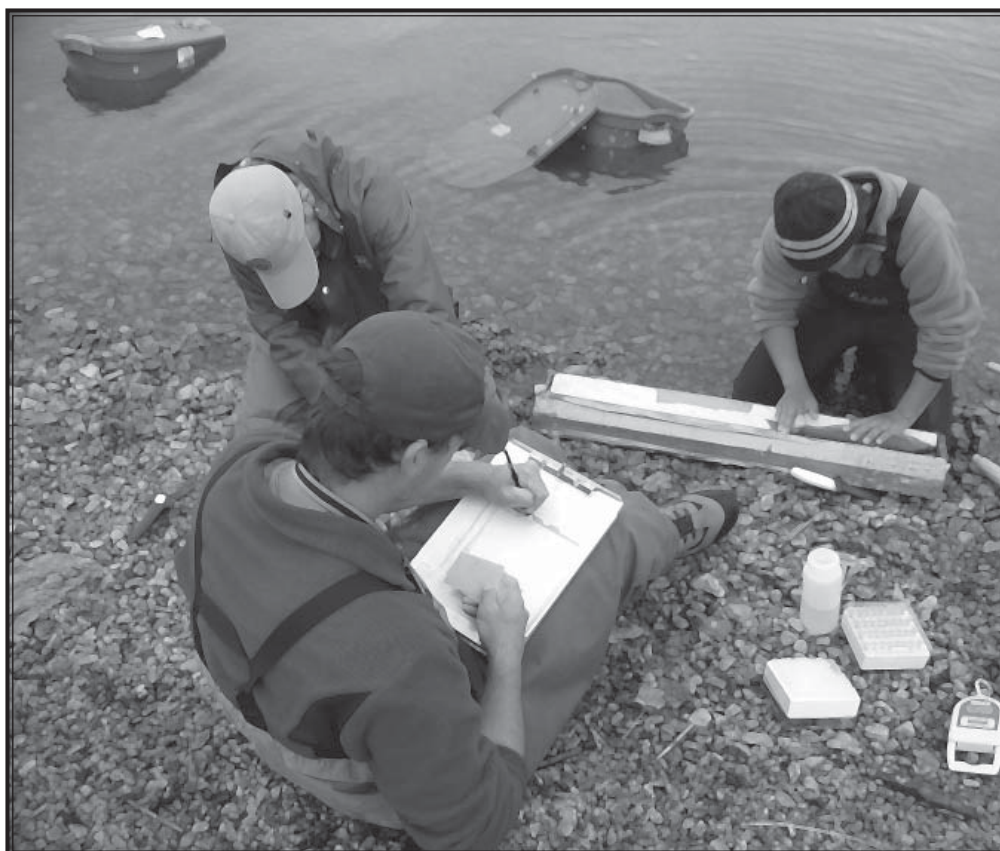
I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Alex Nick, DFO
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Harry Wilde, Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional
Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

DRAFT
2007
FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Since 1999, under the authority of Title VIII of ANILCA, the Federal government has assumed management responsibility for subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska. Expanded subsistence fisheries management has imposed substantial new informational needs for the Federal system. Section 812 of ANILCA directs the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, cooperating with the State of Alaska and other Federal agencies, to research fish and wildlife and subsistence uses on Federal public lands. To increase the quantity and quality of information available for management of subsistence fisheries, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) was created within the Office of Subsistence Management. The Monitoring Program was envisioned as a collaborative inter-agency, inter-disciplinary approach to enhance existing fisheries research, and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands.

Original guidance for the Monitoring Program was provided by the Federal Subsistence Board and outlined in the *Operational Strategy for Information Management*¹. The Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) have identified important issues and information needs for their regions, with review and update on an annual basis. To ensure that the Monitoring Program addresses the highest priority information needs for Federal subsistence fisheries management, the Office of Subsistence Management began a strategic planning process in 2004 to build on the work done by the Councils. Facilitated workshops for the Southwest, Southcentral, and Southeast regions have been held over the last three years with representatives of Federal and State agencies, academia, Alaska Native and rural organizations, and Councils. Participants at each workshop identified fisheries units for their region; developed goals, objectives, and information needs for each fishery unit; and then prioritized fishery units, goals, objectives and information needs. Final workshop reports for the Southcentral region and Bristol Bay-Chignik area have been completed, and results were used to guide the 2007 Request for Proposals. The Kodiak-Aleutians report should be completed by November 2006, the first workshop for the Northern Alaska Region is tentatively scheduled for spring 2007, and plans for the remaining regions should be completed within three years.

The mission of the Monitoring Program is to identify and provide information needed to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands, for rural Alaskans, through a multidisciplinary, collaborative program.

To implement the Monitoring Program, a collaborative approach is utilized where five Federal agencies (Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and USDA Forest Service) work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Regional Advisory Councils, Alaska Native organizations, and other organizations. An inter-agency Technical Review Committee provides scientific evaluation of proposals and investigation plans. Public review and recommendations for funding are provided through the Councils. An inter-agency Staff Committee reviews all recommendations, and reconciles differences between staff and public recommendations. The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) approves annual monitoring plans with the benefit of both a technical recommendation by the Technical Review Committee and public review by the Regional Advisory Councils.

¹ Krueger, C., Brelsford, T., Casipit, C., Harper, K., Hildebrand, I., Rost, P., Thompson, K., and Jones, L. 1999. *Federal Subsistence Fisheries Management: Operational Strategy for Information Management. Report to the Federal Subsistence Staff Committee by the Sub-Committee for the Development of a Blueprint for Interagency Functions, Roles, and Responsibilities.* 122 p.

The purpose of this section is to present the Technical Review Committee's funding recommendations for the 2007 Monitoring Plan.

PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

The Technical Review Committee evaluates proposals, and subsequently full investigation plans, and makes recommendations for funding. The committee is chaired by the Chief of the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Information Services Division, and is composed of representatives from each of the five Federal agencies and three representatives from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. An additional anthropologist from the Minerals Management Service provides additional social science expertise on the Technical Review Committee and provides a balance of disciplines. Staff from Fisheries Information Services provides support for the committee.

Four factors are used to evaluate studies:

1. Strategic Priority

Proposed projects should address the following and must meet the first criteria to be eligible for Federal subsistence funding.

Federal Jurisdiction—Issue or information needs addressed in projects must have a direct association to a subsistence fishery within a Federal conservation unit as defined in legislation, regulation and plans.

Conservation Mandate—Risk to the conservation of species and populations that support subsistence fisheries, and risk to conservation unit purposes as defined in legislation, regulation and plans.

Allocation Priority—Risk of failure to provide a priority to subsistence uses, and risk that subsistence harvest needs will not be met.

Data Gaps—Amount of information available to support subsistence management (higher priority given where a lack of information exists).

Role of Resource—Contribution of a species to a subsistence harvest (e.g., number of villages affected, pounds of fish harvested, miles of river) and qualitative significance (e.g., cultural value, unique seasonal role).

Local Concern—Level of user concerns over subsistence harvests (e.g., upstream vs. downstream allocation, effects of recreational use, changes in fish abundance and population characteristics).

2. Technical-Scientific Merit

The project must meet accepted standards for design, information collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting. Projects should have clear study objectives, an appropriate sampling design, correct statistical analysis, a realistic schedule and budget, and appropriate products, including written reports. Projects must not duplicate work already being done.

3. Investigator Ability and Resources

Investigators must have the ability and resources to successfully complete the proposed study. This will be evaluated using the following information for each investigator:

Ability

- Education and training
- Related work experience
- Publications, reports, and presentations
- Past or ongoing work on Monitoring Program studies

Resources

- Office and laboratory facilities
- Technical and logistic support
- Personnel and budget administration

4. Partnership-Capacity Building

Partnerships and capacity building are priorities of the Monitoring Program. ANILCA mandates that the Federal government provide rural residents a meaningful role in the management of subsistence fisheries, and the Monitoring Program offers tremendous opportunities for partnerships and participation of local residents in monitoring and research. Investigators are requested to include a strategy for integrating local capacity development in their investigation plans. Investigators must complete appropriate consultations with local villages and communities in the area where the project is to be conducted. Letters of support from local organizations add to the strength of a proposal. Investigators and their organizations should demonstrate their ability to maintain effective local relationships and commitment to capacity building.

POLICY AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

Several policies have been developed to aid in implementing funding.

- Studies must be non-duplicative with existing projects.
- Most Monitoring Program funding is dedicated to non-Federal sources.
- Activities not eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program include: a) habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement; b) hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement, and supplementation; c) contaminant assessment, evaluation, and monitoring; and d) projects where the primary objective is capacity building (e.g., science camps, technician training, intern programs). These activities would most appropriately be addressed by the land management agencies.
- Proposals may be funded for up to three years duration.

Finances and Guideline Model for Funding

The Monitoring Program was first implemented in 2000, with an initial investment of \$5 million. Since 2001, a total of \$6.25 million is annually allocated for the Monitoring Program. The Department of Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, annually provides \$4.25 million. The Department of Agriculture, through the U.S. Forest Service, annually provides \$2 million. On an annual basis, this budget funds both continuations of existing studies (year-2 or 3 of multi-year projects), and new study starts. Budget guidelines are established by geographic region and data type, and for 2007, \$3.97 million is available for new starts. Proposals are solicited according to the following two data types.

1. Stock Status and Trends Studies (SST).

These projects address abundance, composition, timing, behavior, or status of fish populations that sustain subsistence fisheries with nexus to Federal public lands. The budget guideline for this category is two-thirds of available funding.

2. Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (HM-TEK).

These projects address assessment of subsistence fisheries including quantification of harvest and effort, and description and assessment of fishing and use patterns. The budget guideline for this category is one-third of available funding.

2007 FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN

For 2007, a total of 37 investigation plans are under consideration for funding (Table 1). Of these, 30 are SST projects and 7 are HM-TEK projects. The Technical Review Committee recommends funding 35 of these investigation plans.

Total funding available for new projects in 2007 is \$3.97 million while the proposed cost of funding all 37 projects submitted would be \$4.04 million. The 35 projects recommended for funding by the Technical Review Committee would have a total cost of \$3.80 million. In making their recommendations, the committee also weighed the importance of funding new projects in 2007 with the knowledge that only about \$2.2 million will be available for new projects in 2008. As has been done in past years, any unallocated Monitoring Program funds from the current year will be used to increase the amount of funding available for the subsequent year.

As recommended by the Technical Review Committee, the 2007 Monitoring Plan would provide 35% of the funding to Alaska Native organizations, 28% to Federal agencies, and 33% to State agencies (Figure 1).

Table 1. Number of investigation plans received for funding consideration in 2007, and number recommended for funding by the Technical Review Committee. Data types are stock status and trends (SST), and harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge (HM-TEK).

Geographic Region	Investigation Plans			Technical Review Committee		
	SST	HM-TEK	Total	SST	HM-TEK	Total
Northern Alaska	3	1	4	3	1	4
Yukon	5	3	8	5	2	7
Kuskokwim	6	0	6	6	0	6
Southwest Alaska	5	2	7	5	1	6
Southcentral Alaska	4	0	4	4	0	4
Southeast Alaska	7	1	8	7	1	8
Total	30	7	37	30	5	35

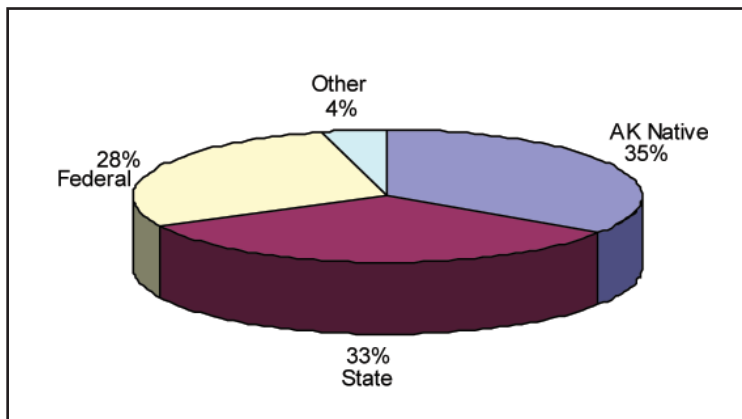


Figure 1. Distribution of 2007 funding to Alaska Native, Federal, State, and other organizations.

HOW TO PROVIDE YOUR COMMENTS

We invite your review and comments on the draft Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan for 2007. Regional Advisory Councils will have an opportunity to review the draft Monitoring Plan during Council meetings in the fall of 2006.

Your comments are welcome by October 20, 2006. These will be compiled along with Council comments and will be presented to the Federal Subsistence Board when it meets in January 2007. Written comments may be submitted to:

Office of Subsistence Management
Attn: Kathy Orzechowski
3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: 1-800-478-1456 Fax: 907-786-3612
E-mail: fisheries_resource_monitoring@fws.gov

YUKON REGION OVERVIEW

ISSUES AND INFORMATION NEEDS

The three Yukon River Regional Advisory Councils (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior, and Eastern Interior) have identified many issues and information needs for the region, with review and update on an annual basis. The three Councils generally identified Chinook and chum salmon as the highest priority species, and non-salmon species and collection and analysis of traditional knowledge have also been identified as important information needs.

The U.S. and Canada Yukon River Salmon Joint Technical Committee Plan was completed in March 2005. A subsequent meeting in November 2005 between State and Federal managers, non-government organizations and natural resource management agencies used the plan to evaluate and prioritize salmon monitoring projects in Alaska. Priorities identified in the meeting (developed through application of the Joint Technical Committee Plan) were used to evaluate the strategic priorities of the Yukon River salmon stock status and trends (SST) proposals submitted for 2007.

PROJECTS CURRENTLY FUNDED UNDER THE FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, 70 projects have been funded in the Yukon Region, and six of these will still be operating in 2006 (Table 1). Many of the projects are continuation projects, but since projects are only funded up to three years, each project is treated as a distinct entity and is evaluated on its merits after three years. Most (54) of the projects have been directed at salmon, and 16 projects have addressed resident fish species such as whitefish and northern pike.

PROJECTS FORWARDED FOR INVESTIGATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Technical Review Committee forwarded eight projects for investigation plan development, including six SST projects and two HM-TEK projects. The investigators for one of the SST proposals declined to submit an investigation plan, and one HM-TEK proposal was moved from the Inter-regional category to the Yukon Region after the investigator revised the investigation plan to focus solely on the Yukon Region. Of the eight projects under consideration in 2007, six focus on salmon, one on sheefish, and one on non-salmon.

Investigators used Technical Review Committee proposal review comments, and sometimes worked with Office of Subsistence Management staff to develop investigation plans. Detailed budgets submitted with each investigation plan allowed identification of funds requested by Alaska Native, State, Federal, and other organizations; funds that would be used to hire local residents; and matching funds from investigators (Tables 2 and 3).

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Federal Subsistence Board guidelines direct initial distribution of funds among regions and data types. For 2007, \$778,000 is available for funding new projects in the Yukon region; this includes \$519,000 for

Table 1. Summary of projects funded under the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in the Yukon Region, 2000–2007. Abbreviations used for investigators are: ADFG=Alaska Department of Fish and Game, AVCP=Association of Village Council Presidents, AV= Arctic Village, BF=Bill Firris, BLM=Bureau of Land Management, BSFA=Bering Sea Fisherman's Association, CATG=Council of Athabaskan Governments, CK=City of Kaltag, DFO=Department of Fisheries and Oceans, EMV= Emmonak Village Council, NPS=National Park Service, NVE=Native Village of Eagle, NVHB= Native Village of Hooper Bay, NVV=Native Village of Venetie, RN=Research North, SVNRC= Stevens Village Natural Resource Office, SZ=Stan Zuray, UAF=University of Alaska Fairbanks, TCC=Tanana Chiefs Conference, TTC=Tanana Tribal Council, UAF=University of Alaska Fairbanks, USFWS=U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS=U.S.Geological Survey, UW=University of Washington, YRDFA=Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Yukon River Salmon Projects									
Effects of <i>Ichthyophonus</i> in Chinook Salmon	UW	\$83.3							
Tanana Upper Kantishna River Fish Wheel	NPS	\$11.5	\$11.5						
Pilot Station Sonar Upgrade	ADFG	\$148.9	\$162.9						
Hooper Bay Test Fishing	ADFG, NVHB	\$30.0	\$27.5	\$31.5	\$26.3				
Pilot Station Sonar Technician Support	AV/CP	\$14.8							
Henshaw Creek Salmon Weir	USFWS	\$60.0	\$60.0	\$60.0	\$73.9				
TEK Salmon and Other Fish in Circle and Eagle	NVE	\$30.0							
Yukon River Salmon Management Teleconferences	YRDFA			\$5.0	\$5.0				
Yukon River Salmon TEK	YRDFA		\$52.5						
Pilot Station Sonar Technician Support	AV/CP		\$13.3						
East Fork Andreafski River Weir	BSFA		\$31.1	\$68.4					
Nulato River Salmon Weir	BSFA		\$10.9	\$31.4	\$31.4		\$31.4		
Rampart Rapids Tagging Study	USFWS		\$100.0	\$100.0	\$100.0		\$100.0		
Kateel River Salmon Weir	USFWS		\$125.2	\$59.7	\$24.5				
Innoko River Drainage Weir Survey	USFWS		\$5.9						
Kaltag Chinook Salmon ASL Sampling	CK		\$1.2						
East Fork Andreafsky Weir Panel Replacement	USFWS		\$35.0						
Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing	ADFG, EMV		\$133.7	\$186.7	\$32.6				
Rampart Rapids Extension	USFWS		\$210.8	\$169.6	\$172.9				
Rampart Rapids Summer Cpue Video	SZ		\$36.1	\$14.1	\$14.1				
Tanana Fisheries Conservation Outreach	TTC		\$9.2	\$9.2	\$9.2				
Effects of <i>Ichthyophonus</i> on Yukon River Chinook Salmon	USGS		\$89.1	\$87.8					
Upper Yukon, Porcupine, and Black River Salmon TEK	CATG		\$64.9						
Pilot Station Sonar Technician Support	AV/CP				\$14.3				

Continued on next page

Table 1. Continued

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Rampart Rapids Fall Chum Handling/Mortality	USFWS			\$45.0			
Sex-ratios of Juvenile and Adult Chinook, Kuskokwim & Yukon Rivers	USFWS			\$13.6	\$11.8		
Yukon River Chinook Genetics	USFWS, ADFG, DFO			\$173.2	\$228.2	\$160.0	
Yukon River Chinook and Chum Salmon In-Season Subsistence	USFWS			\$12.2			
Tozitna River Weir	BLM				\$27.0		
Gisasa River Weir	USFWS				\$70.1		
Phenotypic Characterization of Chinook Salmon Subsistence	YRDFA, USFWS				\$18.5		\$5.7
East Fork Andreafsky River Weir	USFWS				\$53.3		
Yukon River Sub-district 5-A Test Fishwheel	BF				\$32.9		
Tozitna River Weir	BLM					\$66.0	\$66.0
East Fork Andreafsky River Weir	USFWS					\$80.2	\$84.9
Gisasa River Weir	USFWS					\$79.5	\$82.8
Henshaw Creek Weir	USFWS					\$25.0	
Rampart Rapids Fall Chum Abundance	USFWS					\$295.7	\$304.1
Yukon River Chum Salmon GSI	USFWS					\$77.7	\$96.8
Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing	ADFG					\$104.9	\$17.0
Yukon River Chinook Salmon Telemetry	ADFG					\$296.9	
Kaltag Chinook Salmon ASL Sampling	CK					\$3.0	\$3.0
Tek Camp in Fort Yukon	TCC, CATG, ADFG					\$50.9	\$57.4
Tek Study of Upper Yukon River Salmon Fishery	NPS					\$23.1	\$26.9
Tanana Conservation Outreach	TTC, USFWS					\$25.9	\$25.9
Yukon River Salmon Management Teleconferences	YRDFA					\$15.0	\$15.0
Tek of Customary Trade of Subsistence Fish on Yukon River	YRDFA					\$39.4	\$11
Hooper Bay Subsistence Monitoring	ADFG, HBTC					\$36.1	
Coho Salmon Genetics, Yukon River	USFWS					\$22.1	\$27.8
Anvik River Sonar	ADFG					\$58.6	\$38.6
Tanana River Fall Chum Salmon Abundance	ADFG					\$200.4	\$416.2
Henshaw Creek Weir	USFWS, TCC					\$82.1	\$78.5
Yukon River Inseason Salmon Harvest Assessment	USFWS, YRDFA					\$34.0	\$30.0
Yukon River Chum Mixed Stock Analysis	USFWS						\$92.2
Subtotal		\$378.5	\$1,180.9	\$1,081.7	\$931.7	\$1,219.3	\$1,116.0
							\$1,214.7
							\$258.5

Continued on next page

Table 1. Continued

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Yukon River Non-Salmon Projects									
Humpback Whitefish/beaver Interactions	USFWS, CATG	\$46.0							
TEK-Beaver/whitefish Interactions	ADFG, CATG	\$39.3							
Dall River Northern Pike	ADFG, SV	\$24.0							
Humpback Whitefish in Upper Tanana River	USFWS	\$60.0	\$41.0	\$41.0	\$43.1				
TEK of Subsistence Harvests and Fish, Old John Lake	ADFG, AV, USFWS		\$52.0						
Subsistence Survey of Freshwater Fish, Arctic Village	ADFG, AV, USFWS		\$33.3						
TEK and Subsistence Uses of Koyukuk Non-Salmon Fish	ADFG, TCC		\$174.6						
Yukon Flats Northern Pike	ADFG, SV		\$292.0	\$45.5	\$30				
Gash Working Group	USFWS			\$34.2					
Subsistence of Freshwater Fish From Arctic Village	ADFG, NVV			\$32.7					
Lower Yukon River Harvest Monitoring of Non-Salmon Fish	ADFG, TCC			\$60.1	\$100.9	\$69.2			
Oral History and TEK of Subsistence, Old John Lake	USFWS, AV, ADFG			\$9.1					
Upper Tanana Subsistence Fisheries TEK Study	USFWS,UAF, ADFG					\$53.5	\$68.9	\$75.3	
TEK and Radio Telemetry of Whitefish, Kanuti Nwr	USFWS, RN					\$109.0	\$84.0	\$36.3	
TEK and Biological Sampling Non-Salmon	ADFG, USFWS, CATG							\$97.6	\$77.7
TEK and Harvest Survey Non-Salmon	ADFG, LTC							\$76.8	\$53.7
Subtotal		\$169.3	\$592.9	\$222.6	\$174.0	\$231.7	\$152.9	\$286.0	\$131.4
Total Yukon Region Monitoring Program		\$547.8	\$1,773.8	\$1,304.3	\$1,105.7	\$1,451.0	\$1,268.9	\$1,500.7	\$389.9

Table 2. Yukon Region project costs, by organization type, for investigation plans submitted to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for funding consideration in 2007.

Project Number	Title	Project Costs (\$000s)			
		AK Native	State	Federal	Other
Stock Status and Trends Projects					
07-202	East Fork Andreafsky River Weir			\$148.6	
07-204	Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing		\$58.7		
07-206	Innoko River Inconnu Radio Telemetry		\$49.8	\$30.8	
07-207	Gisasa River Salmon Weir			\$123.0	
07-208	Tozitna River Salmon Weir			\$111.3	
Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Projects					
07-251	Salmon Run Abundance and Timing in the Middle/Upper Yukon	\$30.6	\$55.0		\$60.4
07-252	Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and TEK in Northern Yukon Flats	\$3.0	\$80.7	\$6.0	
07-253	Continuity and Change in Yukon River Salmon Harvest Patterns				\$74.4

Table 3. Yukon Region local hire and matching funds for investigation plans submitted to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for funding consideration in 2007. Abbreviations used are: ADFG=Alaska Department of Fish and Game, USFWS=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM= Bureau of Land Management, WA=Wolfe and Associates

Project Number	Lead	Title	Funding (\$000s)	
			Local Hire	Matching
Stock Status and Trends Projects				
07-202	USFWS	Abundance and Run Timing Of Adult Salmon, E. Fork Andreafsky River	\$38.7	\$74.5
07-204	ADFG	Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing		\$19.4
07-206	USFWS	Innoko River <i>Inconnu</i> Radio Telemetry		\$23.0
07-207	USFWS	Gisasa River Salmon Weir	\$11.4	\$67.8
07-208	BLM	Tozitna River Salmon Weir	\$12.0	\$90.0
Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Projects				
07-251	ADFG	Salmon Run Abundance And Timing in the Middle/Upper Yukon	\$4.7	\$19.0
07-252	ADFG	Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and TEK in Northern Yukon Flats		
07-253	WA	Continuity and Change in Yukon River Salmon Harvest Patterns		

stock status and trends (SST) projects, and \$259,000 for harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge (HM-TEK) projects.

PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

After reviewing the eight investigation plans, the Technical Review Committee prioritized them in the following descending order:

07-253	Continuity and Change in Yukon River Salmon Harvest Patterns	\$ 74,431
07-202	East Fork Andreafsky River Salmon Weir	\$ 148,623
07-207	Gisasa River Salmon Weir	\$ 123,016
07-204	Lower Yukon River Drift Test Fishing	\$ 58,708
07-252	Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and TEK in Northern Yukon Flats	\$ 89,691
07-206	Innoko River Inconnu Radio Telemetry	\$ 80,593
07-208	Tozitna River Weir	\$ 111,349
07-251	Salmon Run Abundance and Timing in the Middle/Upper Yukon	\$145,973

These eight projects are a mix of SST and HM-TEK projects, and all will provide information to be used in Federal subsistence fisheries management. A brief description of each project follows (see Executive Summaries for more details).

- **07-253 Continuity and Change in Yukon River Salmon Harvest Patterns** will document continuity, changes and trends in the subsistence salmon fisheries of the Yukon River Drainage. The study will examine existing data sets and data gathered from key informant interviews and systematic household surveys in selected communities of the lower, middle, and upper river.
- **07-202 East Fork Andreafsky River Salmon Weir** is a continuation projects that provides valuable information for Yukon River salmon management. The Andreafsky River weir supports a 12-year data set for salmon escapement in the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit. It operates from late June through July and provides escapement counts for Chinook and chum salmon.
- **07-207 Gisasa River Salmon Weir** is a continuation project which provides information for Yukon River salmon management and supports a 12-year data set for the lower Koyukuk River for salmon escapement in the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit. It operates from late June through the middle of August, and provides escapement counts for Chinook and chum salmon.
- **07-204 Lower Yukon River Drift Test Fishing** is a continuation project that provides one of the first reliable indications of run timing and strength for fall chum and coho salmon returning to the Yukon River.
- **07-252 Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and TEK in Northern Yukon Flats** compliments two completed and one on-going non-salmon TEK projects funded by the Monitoring Program to provide a good understanding of non-salmon harvest and use along the Yukon River. Investigators propose to collect TEK, place names and harvest information pertaining to non-salmon fish species in the communities of Arctic Village, Chalkyitsik, Ft. Yukon and Venetie.

Table 4. Funding recommendations by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for Yukon Region projects, 2007 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Project Number		Requested Budget (\$000)			
Title	TRC	2007	2008	2009	
Stock Status and Trends Projects					
07-202	East Fork Andreafsky River Weir	Yes	\$148.6	\$148.3	\$139.2
07-204	Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing	Yes	\$58.7	\$50.9	\$50.0
07-206	Innoko River Inconnu Radio Telemetry	Yes	\$80.6	\$73.2	\$30.2
07-207	Gisasa River Salmon Weir	Yes	\$123.0	\$127.4	\$135.1
07-208	Tozitna River Salmon Weir	Yes	\$111.3	\$111.3	\$111.3
SST Total			\$522.2	\$511.1	\$465.8
SST Funding Guideline			\$519.0		
TRC SST Recommendation			\$522.2	\$622.4	\$577.1
Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Projects					
07-251	Salmon Run Abundance and Timing in the Middle/Upper Yukon	No	\$146.0	\$168.5	\$92.7
07-252	Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and TEK in northern Yukon Flats	Yes	\$89.7	\$76.4	\$86.0
07-253	Continuity and Change in Yukon river Salmon Harvest Patterns	Yes	\$74.4	\$204.4	\$46.1
HM-TEK Total			\$164.1	\$280.8	\$132.1
HM-TEK Funding Guideline			\$259.0		
TRC HM-TEK Recommendation			\$164.1	\$280.8	\$132.1
Total			\$832.3	\$960.4	\$690.6
Funding Guideline			\$778.0		
TRC Recommendation			\$686.3	\$791.9	\$597.9

- **07-206 Innoko River Inconnu Radio Telemetry** project will radio tag 50 sheefish annually from the Innoko River drainage and track them seasonally to spawning, feeding and overwintering habitats throughout the Yukon River drainage through 2011. Little information is available on the life history of sheefish in the Yukon River, and this project would add significantly to this information gap.
- **07-208 Tozitna River Weir** is a continuation project providing information for Yukon River salmon management. The Tozitna River weir supports five consecutive years of salmon escapement in the middle Yukon River Geographic Unit. It operates from late June through the middle of August, and provides escapement counts for Chinook and chum salmon.
- **07-251 Salmon Run Abundance and Timing in the Middle/Upper Yukon** project will document TEK of natural indicators pertaining to Chinook, summer chum and fall chum salmon abundance and timing in six Yukon River communities (Nulato, Huslia, Galena, Ft. Yukon, Nenana and Eagle). This information will be examined in the context of other information, including ecological data, historical salmon abundance estimates and local observations of environmental change, to elicit patterns and relationships between all sources of information.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

The Technical Review Committee recommends funding seven of the eight projects under consideration. The amount requested by these projects for the first year totals \$686,411, and is within the funding guideline for this region. All seven projects recommended for funding address information of direct relevance and importance to subsistence fisheries under Federal jurisdiction, are technically sound, include a capacity building component, and the investigators are qualified to conduct the work (Table 4).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Project Number: 07-202
Project Title: Abundance and Run Timing of Adult Salmon, East Fork Andreafsky River
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Raymond Hander, USFWS Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
Co-Investigator(s): Francis Thompson, Algaaciq Tribal Council
David Waltemeyer, Association of Village Council Presidents
Ursula Hunt, Yupiit of Andreafski Tribal Council

Cost: **2007:** \$148,623 **2008:** \$148,293 **2009:** \$139,221

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

The abundance and run timing of spawning populations of salmon within the Yukon River drainage have been identified as priority information needs by the Regional Advisory Councils, the Yukon River Comprehensive Management Plan for Alaska, and the Yukon River Joint Technical Committee Plan. The Andreafsky River system supports relatively large populations of Chinook, summer chum and coho salmon. The project's location in the lower river allows its escapement estimates to be used in-season by fishery managers. Data from the project are useful for post-season evaluation of management practices and provide insights for future run projections. The East Fork Andreafsky River weir has operated for the past twelve years and provides one of the longer term databases on escapement in the entire Yukon River, meeting the priority information need of the Office of Subsistence Management to "maintain reliable estimates of Chinook and chum salmon escapement over time." Andreafsky River salmon stocks comprise an important component of the diet of villagers along the Andreafsky River and the Yukon River below and including Pitka's Point. In addition, these stocks are harvested in commercial and subsistence fisheries below the confluence of the Andreafsky River from May through October. This investigation plan addresses enumeration of only Chinook and chum salmon.

OBJECTIVES

1. Determine daily escapement numbers and run timing of two species of adult salmon into the East Fork Andreafsky River.
2. Estimate the age, sex, and length composition of adult Chinook and chum salmon in the East Fork Andreafsky River.
3. Determine the numbers of resident fish species passing the weir.

METHODS

The location of the weir site is approximately 43 rkm upriver from the confluence of the Andreafsky and Yukon Rivers. A resistance board weir will be installed and operated on the Andreafsky River each year

from 2007 to 2009. The abundance of salmon and resident fish species will be recorded to determine run timing and escapement size. A stratified random sampling design will be used to collect age, length, and sex ratio information for Chinook and summer chum salmon.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

The Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office will work with the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Information Services staff to strengthen the capacity building component of this project. Consultation will occur with Ursula Hunt, Andreafsky Tribal Council Leader, and Francis Thompson, Algaaciq Tribal Government, for hiring people from the local area, and David Wages, St. Mary's School Principal, for coordination with the Science Camp. David Waltemeyer, Association of Village Council Presidents will be working with weir personnel to become more familiar with weir operations. The Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office will continue the long running precedence of hiring local persons to staff and operate the Andreafsky River weir and provide outreach and educational opportunities for the benefit of the local communities. Discussions will continue regarding the Association of Village Council Presidents becoming a co-investigator on the project during this funding cycle.

JUSTIFICATION

This project addresses an issue specifically identified as a high priority need in the 2007 Request for Proposals, namely maintenance of reliable estimates of Chinook and chum salmon escapement over time. The Andreafsky River weir supports one of the most comprehensive data sets (12 consecutive years) for salmon escapement in the lower Yukon River. It currently operates from late June through July, providing escapement counts for Chinook and chum salmon. The U.S. section of the Joint Technical Committee ranked the East Fork Andreafsky River weir as third in importance for Chinook salmon, fourth for summer chum salmon, and second for coho salmon among existing escapement projects. Managers use the information provided by this weir as an indicator of run timing and strength in the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit for Chinook and summer chum salmon.

Project Number: 07-204
Project Title: Lower Yukon River Salmon Drift Test Fishing
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Fred Bue and Eric Newland, ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries

Cost: 2007: \$58,708 2008: \$50,876 2009: \$50,876

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Fluctuations in production of Yukon River fall chum salmon make optimal harvest management of the mixed stocks especially difficult. Most commercial salmon harvest occurs near the mouth of the Yukon River in Districts 1 and 2, whereas the majority of the subsistence harvest occurs in the upper portion of the drainage. The subsistence fishery has priority use of these resources, but the fish pass through the major commercial harvesting area in the lower river before they arrive into the upper regions where most of the subsistence harvest occurs. Fishery managers are challenged to quickly and accurately assess run timing and abundance inseason to ensure that sufficient numbers of salmon pass through the downstream commercial fishing districts in order to provide for subsistence needs and adequate escapements to Alaskan and Canadian streams.

This proposal is an extension of the FIS 04-229 cooperative project. The U.S. section of the Joint Technical Committee ranked the lower Yukon River cooperative fall salmon drift test fishing project as one of the highest assessment projects for fall chum salmon based on its performance and utility for providing information relevant for management decisions. Both State and Federal managers are in direct contact with this project inseason which enables a good understanding of the data and its relevance to the fisheries as the salmon return.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the lower Yukon River fall salmon drift gillnet test fishery are to:

1. Estimate relative abundance of fall chum and coho salmon on a daily basis as they enter the mouth of the Yukon River.
2. Estimate run timing of fall chum and coho salmon as they enter the mouth of the Yukon River.
3. Estimate the age, sex, and length composition of the return of fall chum and coho salmon for use in brood year assessment and run forecasting.
4. Build partnerships and capacity by involving local technicians and communities in the project operation and information sharing.

METHODS

Project operation and data collection will be conducted in a manner similar to the project's operations over the past five fall seasons. Two test fish crews will be assigned one each to the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth locations. Drift test fishing will be conducted twice daily at each location using standardized methods and gear for consistency to allow time-series comparisons with previous years. Fishing times and catch by species are recorded and catch per unit effort data is calculated for each drift. Age-sex-length sample data will be collected from a portion of the catch lost due to netting mortality with all mortalities distributed locally.

Test fishing results will be recorded twice daily on Excel spreadsheets at the ADFG Emmonak field office, consolidated and distributed daily to ADFG and USFWS offices. Daily results are made available to the public via an ADFG recorded telephone message. ADFG also provides test fish information to the public in weekly update packets which include other current Yukon River fisheries information that are distributed by fax, email, and web-posting. The updates track the project in season and makes relative comparisons to previous years and subjective observations. Post season, test fish data will be incorporated in annual project reports and merged into a larger data base for access by other studies.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

Staff from the Division of Commercial Fisheries would work cooperatively with local staff from the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association to recruit and appoint local technicians into crew-member positions. Participants would collect data utilizing drift gill nets and use standardized techniques for taking biological samples. In addition, staff from ADFG would mentor local-hire staff to develop skills for advancement within the program. The project will be reviewed inseason by the Regional Advisory Council and communities throughout the Yukon River drainage during teleconferences sponsored by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. The project has been used in the past as a platform to collect biological samples for other studies which will be considered an important function in the future as time permits and opportunities are presented. The annual start up of the fall drift project would be an extension of the summer chum salmon drift test fish project that has cooperative funding from ADFG and the Community Development Quota Program. The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association plans to continue their capacity building commitments by providing additional local technicians to assist in this project as well as overlap with other harvest monitoring projects operating in the same location.

JUSTIFICATION

Although the production of Yukon River fall chum salmon has improved since 2003, the Alaska Board of Fisheries has designated Yukon River fall chum salmon as stocks of yield concern. In 2001, the amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) for Yukon River salmon species was revised. For fall chum salmon the range, based on historical harvests, was set to 89,500 to 167,100 fish annually. The subsistence harvest of fall chum salmon has fallen below the ANS range in five of the last six years. Based on the 1998–2002 averages, approximately 17% of the subsistence harvest and 97% of the commercial harvest of Yukon River fall chum salmon occurs in the lower Yukon River. This project provides one of the first reliable indications of run timing and strength for fall chum and coho salmon returning to the Yukon River. The U.S. Section of the Joint Technical Committee ranked the lower Yukon River cooperative salmon drift test fishing project as one of the highest priority assessment projects for fall chum salmon.

Project Number: 07-206
Project Title: A Radio Telemetry Investigation of the Spawning Origins of Innoko River Sheefish
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Randy Brown, USFWS Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
Co-Investigator(s): John Burr, ADFG Division of Sport Fisheries
Caroline Brown, ADFG Division of Subsistence

Cost: 2007: \$80,593 2008: \$73,159 2009: \$30,240 2010: \$30,976 2011: \$43,187

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Although not identified as a formal priority in the 2007 Monitoring Program, life history and stock distribution information regarding sheefish and other whitefish species utilized in the subsistence fisheries of the Yukon River drainage will be critical for future management of these stocks. Previous sheefish studies carried out in the Innoko River and elsewhere in the Yukon River drainage suggest that they use the Innoko River for feeding only and migrate elsewhere to spawn. Five spawning areas have been identified in the Yukon River drainage; two in the upper Koyukuk River, one in the upper reaches of the Yukon Flats, one in the upper Nowitna River, and one in the Chatanika River. At this point it appears that most or all sheefish in the drainage originate in one of these spawning areas. During their annual migrations between overwintering, feeding, and spawning areas, Innoko River sheefish would undoubtedly be subject to a wide variety of commercial, subsistence, and sport fisheries within the Innoko River and elsewhere in the Yukon River drainage. If Innoko River sheefish are members of Yukon River populations that spawn elsewhere, as suggested by previous studies, then effective management will be possible only by identifying the contributing stocks, the user groups throughout the range of each contributing stock, and the magnitude of the fishery harvests. In this study we propose to use radio telemetry techniques to test the hypothesis that Innoko River sheefish are members of Yukon River populations that spawn in locations other than the Innoko River drainage, and identify the spawning locations of those contributing stocks. Other biological data will be gathered as well, including spawning frequency, feeding habitat fidelity, and annual survival rates.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the spawning origins of sheefish radio-tagged in the Innoko River during summer by surveying known and suspected spawning areas in the drainage during spawning season.
2. Determine spawning frequency of radio-tagged sheefish by locating fish on spawning grounds over the course of four spawning seasons.
3. Investigate feeding habitat fidelity of radio-tagged sheefish by surveying major feeding habitats in the drainage during four summer feeding seasons.
4. Estimate annual survival of radio-tagged sheefish directly by assessing the status of each tagged fish over time.

5. Estimate the proportional contributions of identified spawning stocks to the aggregation of feeding sheefish in the Innoko River during 2007 and 2008.
6. Involve students and other Shageluk community members in the project directly during the tagging component of the project, and provide location data so the community can map the migrations of tagged fish through time.

METHODS

Radio telemetry techniques will be used in this study to identify the spawning origins of mature sheefish (≥ 72.5 cm fl) tagged in the Innoko River drainage during the summer feeding season. The transmitters will be surgically implanted in candidate fish. They will be programmed to operate for eight weeks during each of three seasons; spawning during September and October, overwintering during January and February, and feeding during May and June. They are expected to last for well over 4 years with this operating schedule. Aerial surveys will be conducted to locate tagged fish in known or possible spawning areas, feeding habitats, and overwintering locations. Spawning destinations will be identified based on the presence of radio-tagged fish in previously identified spawning areas, or in new areas of riverine habitats with gravel substrate during late September and early October. Spawning frequency will be evaluated based on the time intervals between spawning events, as determined by their presence in spawning areas during the fall. Feeding habitat fidelity will be investigated based on their presence in the same or different geographic areas during the summer feeding season from one year to the next. Annual survival will be estimated directly based on the fraction of tagged fish that are known to survive from one year to the next. Survival will be judged based on seasonal migrations. Stock contributions to the Innoko River feeding aggregation will be estimated based on the fraction of all sheefish located in spawning habitats that migrate to particular spawning areas. Some of the tagging will be conducted in the vicinity of Shageluk, and regular contact with the Shageluk School and sharing of location data will ensure community awareness and involvement in the project and its findings.

PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Caroline Brown has initiated an arrangement with Joy Hamilton, a teacher in the Shageluk School, to involve middle school students in an educational unit focused on this project. They will read about the project, join us in tagging fish in the Shageluk area, map migrations based on tag locations during the course of the year, share migration data with elders in the community, interview elders about their knowledge and how it relates to the telemetry findings, and write about the project. In this way, the students will take some ownership of the project and communicate the findings to the community.

JUSTIFICATION

Sheefish are an important subsistence resource throughout the Yukon River drainage. Currently, there is little information available on the life history of sheefish in the Yukon River. Sheefish are targeted in subsistence, commercial and sport fisheries, and caught incidentally in salmon fisheries. This project would build on the work initiated in 2005 on the lower Nowitna River. In 2007–2008, investigators propose to radio tag 50 sheefish annually from the Innoko River drainage and track them seasonally through 2011. This project will provide the opportunity to relocate each fish four times during spawning and feeding periods and three times during the overwintering period. The investigators have a strong capacity building component incorporating multiple disciplines and emphasizing outreach to local

communities. The Technical Review Committee recommends funding this project for 3 years, with years 4–5 funding contingent upon committee review.

Project Number: 07-207
Project Title: Abundance and Run Timing of Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon in the Gisasa River, Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Mark Voight, USFWS Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office

Cost: **2007:** \$123,016 **2008:** \$127,440 **2009:** \$135,138

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Assessment of management actions for Yukon River salmon fisheries is difficult due to the limited number of escapement studies in the drainage. Within the Koyukuk River drainage, a major tributary in the middle-lower Yukon River, the Gisasa River weir is one of two projects (Henshaw Creek weir) that provides inseason information to assess management actions as well as a postseason indexes of escapements of other tributaries within the Koyukuk River. Federal and State managers have consistently identified this project as an important source of information for fishery management. Also, the Yukon River Comprehensive Management Plan describes the need for escapement monitoring projects in the Koyukuk River region. Further, in November 2005 the Joint Technical Committee of the Yukon River Panel identified the Gisasa River weir as the second highest priority among lower river projects for Chinook salmon. The project was also identified as the third highest priority for summer chum salmon. The Gisasa River weir has operated for the past twelve years and provides one of the longer term databases on escapement in the entire Yukon River.

OBJECTIVES

This project is proposed as a three-year (2007–2009) study. The objectives are:

1. Enumerate the daily passage of Chinook and summer chum salmon.
2. Describe the age, sex, and length of Chinook and summer chum salmon.
3. Enumerate the daily passage of resident fish species.

METHODS

Investigators will install a resistance board weir across the Gisasa River, 4 km upstream from the mouth of the Gisasa River. The weir and passing chute will funnel fish into a live trap, which holds the fish so they can be counted (by species). Fish sampling will include measuring length, determining sex, and collecting scales.

PARTNERSHIP/CAPACITY BUILDING

Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office and the Refuge have strived for local involvement and capacity building with the project, and initial interest had been expressed by residents in the Galena area. However, the remoteness of the weir site reduces the attraction of the project, and subsequent interest has not developed. Nevertheless, the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office and the Refuge are committed to continually promoting capacity building by describing project opportunities at Regional Advisory Council, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, and Refuge coordination meetings. In 2007, renewed efforts will focus on promoting the project and the potential for local involvement to tribal and village groups in the lower Koyukuk River area.

JUSTIFICATION

This project addresses an issue specifically identified as a high priority need in the 2007 Request for Proposals, namely maintenance of reliable estimates of Chinook and chum salmon escapement over time. The project is technically sound and the Gisasa River weir supports one of the most comprehensive data sets (12 consecutive years) for salmon escapement in the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit for Chinook and summer chum salmon. It currently operates from late June through the middle of August, and provides escapement counts for Chinook and chum salmon. The U. S. Section of the Joint Technical Committee ranked the Gisasa River weir as second importance for Chinook salmon and third for summer chum salmon among existing escapement projects. Managers use the information provided by this weir project as an indicator of run timing and strength.

Project Number: 07-208
Project Title: Abundance and Run Timing of Adult Salmon in the Tozitna River
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Bob Karlen, Carl Kretsinger, and Jason Post, Bureau of Land Management

Cost: **2007:** \$111,349 **2008:** \$111,349 **2009:** \$111,349

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

There is a need to document the abundance and run timing of salmon spawning in the middle and upper portions of the Yukon River. This data gap has been identified by fishery managers and as part of the Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan for Alaska. The current lack of information makes it difficult for Federal and State managers to adjust fishing schedules to assure that the many objectives of salmon management are met. Recent severe declines in Yukon River drainage salmon runs have resulted in additional concerns about conserving stocks and providing for subsistence uses. The region's Regional Advisory Councils have called for a range of studies to address the salmon declines, including new projects that assess the production of salmon from tributary streams and quantify their contribution to the overall productivity of the Yukon River drainage. The Tozitna River escapement project addresses these concerns.

OBJECTIVES

1. Count adult Chinook and summer chum salmon passing through the weir.
2. Describe run-timing characteristics of Chinook and summer chum salmon.
3. Estimate the proportion of Chinook and summer chum salmon spawning in the Tozitna River downstream of the weir and document the location of spawning habitat throughout the drainage using aerial survey techniques.
4. Estimate the age and sex composition of Chinook and summer chum salmon weekly.
5. Estimate the mean length of Chinook and summer chum salmon by sex and age.

METHODS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to count adult Chinook and summer chum salmon as they pass through a floating resistance-board weir located at river kilometer 79 on the Tozitna River. Counting and sampling for age, sex, and length information would begin with the arrival of the first salmon and continue until the daily salmon passage drops to <1% of the cumulative count for three consecutive days for both species.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2005 (and again in 2006), the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association provided BLM with a research assistant who provided the project with over 30 years of local knowledge. In an ongoing effort to involve nearby communities in the project, BLM would like to continue hiring rural residents while using the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association as a source of technicians for the project. If the project is funded, BLM will put a portion of the money into an agreement with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association to cover the annual cost of one technician for the project.

To further capacity development, BLM also presents the Tozitna River escapement data annually to the Resource Advisory Councils as a means of information sharing with subsistence users of the Yukon River. BLM has also promoted interaction with subsistence users through the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. Kim Elkin (Tanana Chiefs Conference) and Dave Waltemyer (Association of Village Council Presidents) and their technicians from the Partners Program visited the Tozitna project in 2003 in an effort to gain exposure to project operations and data gathering methodologies. BLM encourages continued information sharing like this in the future.

JUSTIFICATION

This project addresses an issue specifically identified as a high priority need in the 2007 Request for Proposals. The project is technically sound and supports 5 consecutive years of salmon escapement in the middle Yukon River. The U.S. Section of the Joint Technical Committee ranked the project as sixth importance for both Chinook and summer chum salmon, making the Tozitna River weir the lowest ranked Chinook salmon monitoring project in the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit. Managers use the information provided by this weir as an indicator of run timing and strength for the lower Yukon River Geographic Unit for Chinook and summer chum salmon.

Project Number: 07-251
Project Title: Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Salmon Run Abundance and Timing in the Middle and Upper Yukon River Area
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Principal Investigator: Caroline Brown, ADFG Division of Subsistence
Co-Investigator(s): Catherine Moncrieff and Kristin Mull, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
David Andersen, Research North
Ed Krause, Huslia Traditional Council

Cost: **2007:** \$145,973 **2008:** \$168,503 **2009:** \$92,699

RECOMMENDATION: Do Not Fund

ISSUE

Yukon River managers face significant challenges in assessing salmon run timing and abundance both in the pre-season outlooks and during inseason management. Between 1997 and 2002, sharp declines in salmon abundance caused severe hardship for fishery-dependent communities in the Yukon River drainage. This project focuses on locally significant methods for assessing salmon runs, documented in six representative communities within the middle and upper Yukon River drainage. The primary goal is to document this traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) through ethnographic interviews, mapping, and participant-observation, and then correlate it with recorded, geographically-specific environmental change. TEK research will document long-term observations of relationships between salmon runs and environmental factors that will contribute to management priorities by a) broadening the field of correlatives that have significance for understanding Yukon River salmon runs, and b) generating new research questions based on these correlatives that may address management priorities of providing more accurate assessments of salmon run timing and abundance.

OBJECTIVES

1. Document TEK of natural indicators for Chinook, summer chum, and fall chum salmon in six middle and upper Yukon communities.
2. Promote capacity building in local communities, tribal organizations, non-profit organization and governmental agencies
3. Analyze relationships and patterns between documented TEK of natural indicators, ecological data, historical salmon abundance estimates, and local observations of environmental change

METHODS

Researchers will employ a variety of social science methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, and mapping. Researchers will attempt to conduct an average of 8–10 interviews per community. The interview protocol will be designed to elicit information about natural indicators and

other techniques utilized in locally assessing various characteristics of the run itself as well as harvesting or processing salmon during the run. Prior to fieldwork, Principal Investigators will conduct an extensive literature review of existing data on natural indicators.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

This project will build capacity for all research partners in several ways. Principal investigators will hire local research partners in each community to assist with setting up and conducting interviews. Huslia researchers will build capacity through increased experience conducting TEK research and analyzing the results, complementing their current work on a Tribal Wildlife Grant, and assist other investigators with research protocol design. All research partners will be trained in GIS methods and techniques in compiling mapped data. Finally, social scientists partners will benefit from working with biologically trained researchers in developing research questions and analyzing data, while biologist principal investigators will be exposed to ethnographic interviewing and analysis.

JUSTIFICATION

The Technical Review Committee does not recommend this investigation plan for funding. Investigators are uniquely well qualified to conduct the proposed research, and have performed successfully on numerable Monitoring Program projects. The capacity building parameters of the project are high, and the partnership of investigators is particularly strong. However, while the ideas are interesting, the analytical component is not well developed, and the management application is questionable and not well described in the investigation plan. The cost, which increased 41% over the proposal, is extremely high, especially given the experimental nature of the project design. Nonetheless, the project explores some ideas that are worth further development and investigators should think about designing a small pilot study to test the approach, or to utilize the project currently funded by the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative to further develop the analytical approach.

Project Number: 07-252
Project Title: Non-Salmon Fishing Practices and Traditional Knowledge in the Northern Yukon Flats Region of Alaska
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Principal Investigator: Mike Koskey, ADFG Division of Subsistence
Co-Investigator(s): Hishinlai' "Kathy" Sikorski, UAF Alaska Native Language Center
Ingrid McSweeney, Bureau of Land Management
Wennona Brown, USFWS Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge
Davey James, Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government

Cost: **2007:** \$89,691 **2008:** \$76,433 **2009:** \$85,957

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Non-salmon fish are an important subsistence resource. There may be an inverse relationship between salmon and non-salmon harvests, but there is little in-depth information on the changes that have influenced non-salmon fishing practices in the Northern Yukon Flats region. The ADFG Community Subsistence Information System reports wide variation in the contribution of non-salmon fish to the regional subsistence harvest by both year and location. The greatest take of non-salmon fish reported for a single year (1987) was in Fort Yukon at 75,965 pounds (29,083 fish). The proposed project will provide information on the contemporary harvest and use of non-salmon fish by residents of four Yukon Flats communities: Chalkyitsik, Venetie, Arctic Village and Fort Yukon—and to place these data within a historical framework of changing fishing practices within the region

OBJECTIVES

This project is designed on a three-year time-frame with the following goals:

1. Document the traditional ecological knowledge of non-salmon fish species in the Yukon Flats communities of Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Venetie, and Arctic Village.
2. Estimate the harvest levels and use patterns of non-salmon fish species by village residents through systematic household surveys.
3. Identify and document historic and contemporary non-salmon harvest areas through resource use and Gwich'in placename mapping.

METHODS

The project relies on semi-structured ethnographic interviews with elders and other knowledgeable fishers, mapping, placename analysis, archival research, and participant-observation in order to address the first objective. The second objective is addressed through the implementation of a household harvest survey in each community conducted by a local research assistant. The final objective is addressed

through a review of previously collected Gwich'in placenames as well as resource use mapping to be conducted during ethnographic interviews and reviewed during community meetings

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

One of the primary strengths of this project is the cooperation of five organizations representing two Federal agencies (BLM and USFWS), one State agency (ADFG), one academic institution (Alaska Native Language Center), and one Alaska Native government (Gwichyaa Zhee).

JUSTIFICATION

The Technical Review Committee recommends funding this project. This is a potentially important project that ties in with several other Monitoring Program funded projects to provide a comprehensive understanding of non salmon harvest and use along the Yukon River. The project addresses an issue specifically identified as a high priority in the 2007 Request for Proposals, namely evaluating patterns and trends in subsistence fish harvests for important non-salmon fish species, and will likely provide valuable information for Federal subsistence fisheries management. The project is technically sound, contains a solid capacity building project, and investigators are qualified to conduct the proposed work. Investigators responded to Technical Review Committee comments in full. The budget increased 33% over the proposal submitted in January 2006.

Project Number: 07-253
Project Title: Continuity and Change in Salmon Harvest Patterns, Yukon River Drainage, Alaska
Geographic Region: Yukon
Data Type: Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Principal Investigator: Robert J. Wolfe, Robert Wolfe and Associates
Co-Investigator(s): Cheryl Scott, Alaskan Connections

Cost: 2007: \$74,431 **2008:** \$204,370 **2009:** \$46,116

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUES

The primary issues addressed are the factors contributing to changes in subsistence harvest patterns for salmon along the Yukon River since the 1990s, the period of recent collapse of summer chum, fall chum, and coho salmon runs and restrictions of local subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries. The study will describe and analyze continuity, change, and trends in harvest patterns of federally-qualified subsistence users during this time period. The analysis will clarify how local families have responded to the salmon downturn in terms of household participation rates, fishing areas, mobility, use of seasonal fishing camps, types of equipment (such as boats, motors, fishwheels, net mesh size, and net length), effort, labor force composition, commercial-subsistence fishing interactions, species selection, harvests of fish, furbearers, and other wildlife, customary management practices, and other factors. The research will explore relationships of subsistence salmon harvests with other sectors of the local socioeconomic system, including commercial salmon harvests, furbearer harvests, and other fish and wildlife harvests. This type of information fits with Priority Information Needs for the Yukon Region: "Evaluate patterns and trends in subsistence fish harvests; factors to include, but are not limited to, demographic, economic, regulatory, and cultural issues."

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to document continuity, change, and trends in the subsistence salmon fisheries of the Yukon River drainage as families have responded to salmon declines during the 1990s. The research will describe and examine continuity and changes in factors such as the following: local participation in salmon fishing, fishing efficiency, equipment, areas, mobility, fishing camps, species composition, workers, dogs, dog food, trapping/hunting furbearers, customary management of furbearer areas, commercial-subsistence fishing relationships, and out-migration of family members. The objective of the analysis is to produce a report that assesses continuity and change in these factors.

METHODS

The primary methods are face-to-face interviews with knowledgeable, local subsistence experts, and systematic surveys of households in three villages in the lower, middle, and upper Yukon River drainage.

Additional methods are the compilation and analysis of existing databases on fish harvests by area, and consultation with other experts familiar with the fisheries.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

This project will develop partnerships and build capacity in rural villages. Before collecting new information, the first year provides a period of consultation with rural villages, fishing organizations, and local experts. The principal investigator will train three local researchers at each village location in social science methodology, including training in survey construction, sample selection, survey administration, note taking, key respondent interviews, and data management techniques. The local researchers will be responsible for conducting household interviews, comprising a central part of the study. To the extent the local researchers are members of existing rural organizations, this training will build capacity in local entities as well as in individuals. The project will pay honorarium to persons interviewed as part of the project. This recognizes the significant contributions of their knowledge in documenting trends and patterns in subsistence fisheries.

JUSTIFICATION

The Technical Review Committee recommends funding this project. The project addresses an issue specifically identified as a high priority issue in the 2007 Request for Proposals, namely to evaluate patterns and trends in subsistence fish harvests, including demographic, economic, regulatory and cultural issues. Project investigators are uniquely qualified to conduct the proposed work, and have a proven track record in conducting complex analyses such as the one described in this investigation plan. Investigators were highly responsive to all the Technical Review Committee comments, and have provided a very thorough, well written, and technically sound project. While somewhat high, the budget is clearly justified in the investigation plan, and based on the extensive involvement of the principal investigators in all phases of the project, appears justified. Understanding changing harvest patterns is a critical element of Federal subsistence fisheries management, and this research will make a significant contribution towards this goal. Investigators are encouraged to include an assessment of the effects of windowed fishing schedules on subsistence fishing in their analysis.

KUSKOKWIM REGION OVERVIEW

ISSUES AND INFORMATION NEEDS

The two Kuskokwim Regional Advisory Councils (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Councils), with guidance provided by the Kuskokwim Fisheries Resource Coalition (Kuskokwim Coalition)¹, have identified a number of broad categories of issues and information needs for the Kuskokwim Region. These include collection and analysis of traditional ecological knowledge; harvest monitoring; salmon assessment and escapement; non-salmon fish species assessment; and marine/coastal salmon ecology and contaminants. Monitoring Program project selections to date have generally addressed these issues. The 2007 Request for Proposals identified three high priority issues for the Kuskokwim Region: evaluating patterns and trends in subsistence fish harvests; estimating subsistence salmon harvests; and maintaining reliable estimates of abundance, run timing, stock structure, productivity, and carrying capacity of salmon stocks.

A strategic salmon planning process was completed by the Kuskokwim Coalition for the Kuskokwim Region in 2006. This three-year effort was funded by the Office of Subsistence Management, the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative, and the Bering Sea Fisheries Association, which also administered the planning effort. Proposals and investigation plans submitted to the Monitoring Program for 2007 were reviewed by the Kuskokwim Coalition in light of priorities established in the completed salmon plan. Strategic planning in the Kuskokwim Region for non-salmon species will be initiated after 2007 by the Office of Subsistence Management.

PROJECTS CURRENTLY FUNDED UNDER THE FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, 57 projects have been funded in the Kuskokwim Region, and seven of these will still be operating during 2007 (Table 1). These projects provide information needed to manage and conserve subsistence fisheries resources, address fisheries issues and priorities identified by the Kuskokwim Regional Advisory Councils and address regulatory actions. Presently, the Monitoring Program supports over 50% of all fisheries monitoring and research conducted in the Kuskokwim Region.

PROJECTS FORWARDED FOR INVESTIGATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Eight proposals for research in the Kuskokwim Region were submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management. The Technical Review Committee reviewed the proposals and recommended six for development of investigation plans. Investigators responded to Technical Review Committee proposal review comments in developing their investigation plans, and worked with Office of Subsistence Management staff to accomplish revisions. Detailed budgets submitted with each investigation plan allowed identification of funds requested by Alaska Native, State, Federal, and other organizations;

¹ The Kuskokwim Fisheries Resource Coalition, composed of key fisheries staff from the Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Orutsarmiut Native Council, Kuskokwim Native Association, McGrath Native Village Council, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been instrumental in providing coordination and recommendations for the Kuskokwim Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

Table 1. Summary of projects funded under the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in the Kuskokwim Region by subsistence fishery, 2000–2007. Abbreviations used for investigators are: ADFG=Alaska Department of Fish and Game, AVCP=Association of Village Council Presidents, BSFA=Bearing Sea Fisherman's Association, KNA-Kuskokwim Native Association, MNVC=McGrath Native Village Council, NPT=Nuniarmiut Piciyavata Tamaryalkuti, Inc., ONC=Orutsarmiut Native Council, OVK-Organized Village of Kwethluk, TNC=Tuluksak Native Community, USFWS=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Kuskokwim River Salmon Projects									
Tatlawiksuk River Weir	ADFG, KNA	\$30.0	\$22.9	\$30.0	\$87.1				
Kwethluk River Weir	USFWS, OVK	\$204.9	\$113.0	\$117.2	\$116.6				
Documentation/communication on Floating Weirs	AVCP	\$5.2							
Kuskokwim Salmon Project Site Surveys	ADFG, USFWS	\$12.9							
Tuluksak River Weir	USFWS, TNC		\$200.2	\$130.8	\$138.3				
Genetic Diversity of Kuskokwim River Chinook	ADFG, USFWS		\$125.1	\$154.1	\$10.0				
Kuskokwim River Escapement Project Technician	ONC		\$10.7	\$12.9	\$14.0				
Natural Resource Internship Program	KNA		\$78.9						
Kuskokwim River Salmon Work Group Support	ADFG		\$20.9	\$99.4					
Kuskokwim Salmon ASL Assessment	ADFG		\$56.6	\$98.3	\$37.1				
Holitna River Chinook, Chum and Coho Telmetry	ADFG		\$672.7						
Kuskokwim River Chinook Inriver Abundance	ADFG			\$177.2	\$70.8	\$92.1			
Kuskokwim River Salmon Mark Recapture	ADFG, KNA				\$50.1				
Kuskokwim Coho Salmon Genetics	ADFG, USFWS				\$38.3				
Kuskokwim Science Plan	BSFA				\$65.0				
Kwethluk River Weir	USFWS, OVK					\$131.2	\$121.2	\$131.2	
Tuluksak River Weir	USFWS, TNC					\$119.6	\$119.6	\$119.6	
Holitna River Chinook and Chum Salmon Telemetry	ADFG					\$231.1			
Kuskokwim Salmon ASL Sampling Program	ADFG					\$85.3	\$87.8	\$87.8	
Kalskag Mark Recapture Study	ADFG					\$141.2	\$144.8	\$144.8	
KNA Intership Program	KNA					\$23.4	\$23.4	\$23.4	
Tatlawiksuk River Weir	ADFG, KNA					\$200.2	\$42.2	\$122.2	
Kuskokwim Coho Salmon Genetic Mixed Stock Assessment	USFWS					\$66.2			
Bethel Inseason Subsistence Harvest Data	ONC	\$17.7							
Bethel Post-Season Harvest Monitoring	ADFG, ONC	\$32.2							
Planning Meetings in AVCP Region	AVCP, KNA		\$34.4						

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Table 1. Continued

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Upper Kuskokwim River Inseason Data	ADFG, MNVC		\$16.1	\$30.7	\$12.1				
Bethel Area Post-Season Fishery Household Surveys	ADFG, ONC		\$32.3	\$32.3	\$32.3				
Bethel Area Inseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest Data	ONC, ADFG		\$46.1	\$55.3	\$38.5				
Survey of Sport Fisheries, Aniak River	ADFG, KNA		\$100.8						
Middle Kuskokwim River Inseason Salmon Harvest	KNA, ADFG, USFWS		\$47.4	\$45.7	\$24.0				
Subsistence Fisheries Research Capacity Building	ADFG		\$31.8	\$15.9					
Aniak Area Post-season Subsistence Fishery Surveys	ADFG, KNA			\$10.2					
Bethel Area Inseason Subsistence Salmon Data Collection	ADFG, ONC				\$62.4				
Kuskokwim Postseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest Surveys	ADFG, KNA, ONC				\$158.5				
Inriver Abundance of Chinook Salmon	ADFG						\$357.6	\$346.2	
George And Takotna River Weirs	ADFG						\$72.0	\$168.2	
Kuskokwim Chinook Salmon Genetic Stock Identification	ADFG						\$106.0	\$73.2	\$18.7
Lower Kuskokwim Salmon Subsistence Harvest ASL Sampling	ADFG, ONC						\$41.6	\$47.5	\$56.4
Lower Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fisheries Catch Monitoring	ONC						\$26.5		
Kuskokwim Area Postseason Subsistence Harvest Survey	ADFG, ONC, KNA						\$74.2	\$74.2	\$74.3
Lower Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fisheries Catch Monitoring	ONC							\$33.9	\$36.0
Kuskokwim River Cooperative Salmon Management	ADFG							\$31.0	\$32.3
<i>Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Projects</i>	Subtotal	\$302.9	\$1,609.9	\$1,010.0	\$734.2			\$1,403.3	\$217.7
Extend Goodnews River Weir Operations	ADFG	\$25.0	\$25.0	\$25.0	\$27.4				
Goodnews River Weir Coho Extension	ADFG					\$55.7		\$28.2	
Extend Kanektok River Weir Operations	USFWS	\$3.0	\$1.5						
Kanektok River Salmon Weir	ADFG, BSFA		\$122.5	\$131.5	\$123.7				
Kanektok River Weir	ADFG, BSFA					\$114.4	\$145.0	\$130.7	
Kuskokwim Bay TEK and Oral History	USFWS					\$60.5	\$14.6		
Nunivak Island Subsistence Fisheries	NPT						\$61.0	\$45.0	
Subtotal		\$28.0	\$149.0	\$156.5	\$151.1	\$230.6	\$220.6	\$203.9	\$0.0

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Table 1. Continued

Title	Investigators	Budget (\$000s)							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<i>Resident Species Projects</i>									
Humpback and Broad Whitefish in Whitefish Lake	USFWS, KNA		\$146.9	\$119.9	\$127.8				
Aniak River Subsistence Fisheries Study	ADFG, KNA		\$61.1		\$29.8				
Lake Minchumina, Telida, Nikolai and Cantwell Fisheries Use	ADFG		\$9.0	\$20.0					
Whitefish Lake Whitefish Telemetry	USFWS				\$109.8		\$109.8		
Whitefish PIT Tags	USFWS						\$40.0		
Whitefish Migratory Behavior Kuskokwim River Watershed	USFWS, KNA							\$162.7	\$173.1
Lower Kuskokwim Non-Salmon Harvest and TEK	ADFG, AVCP							\$86.1	\$91.8
Subtotal		\$0.0	\$217.0	\$139.9	\$157.6	\$109.8	\$149.8	\$248.8	\$264.9
Total Kuskokwim Region Monitoring Program		\$330.9	\$1,975.9	\$1,306.4	\$1,042.9			\$1,856.0	\$482.6

funds that would be used to hire local residents; and matching funds from investigating agencies and organizations (Tables 2 and 3).

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Federal Subsistence Board guidelines direct initial distribution of funds among regions and data types. For 2007, approximately \$778,000 is available for funding new projects in the Kuskokwim Region. All of this is available for stock status and trends projects since no harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge projects are being considered for funding.

PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

After reviewing the six investigation plans, the Technical Review Committee recommended funding all of them and prioritized them in the following descending order:

07-303	Kuskokwim Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment	\$ 81,440
07-304	Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir	\$154,665
07-306	Kwethluk River Salmon Weir	\$168,000
07-305	Kanektok — Goodnews River Salmon Weir	\$108,900
07-307	Tuluksak River Salmon Weir	\$142,000
07-302	Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction	\$ 49,015

The six projects recommended for funding would provide information concerning in-season subsistence catch monitoring, and development of a run reconstruction and forecasting model for chum salmon stocks. Brief project descriptions follow (see Executive Summaries for more details):

07-303 Kuskokwim Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment. This project will provide continuation funding for the processing, analysis, quality control, distribution and archiving of age, sex and length data from over 30,000 salmon that are routinely collected at fisheries and escapement monitoring projects throughout the region. The proposed work addresses an important research and monitoring need by supporting standardization and quality control for basic biological data for the management of Kuskokwim salmon stocks.

07-304 Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir. This project will continue operation of the Tatlawiksuk River weir. The weir is an established and successful cooperative project, and provides valuable escapement and biological sampling data for salmon stocks in an important sub basin of the Kuskokwim River.

07-306 Kwethluk River Salmon Weir. This project will support continued operations at the Kwethluk River weir to enumerate escapements of Chinook, sockeye, chum and coho salmon. Kwethluk River salmon stocks are harvested by a large lower river subsistence fishery, and pass through a commercial fishing district between the Kuskokwim and the Kwethluk River mouths.

07-305 Kanektok — Goodnews River Salmon Weirs. The Goodnews and Kanektok River weirs are established and successful monitoring projects that provide the primary escapement and run strength data used to ensure sustainability of Kuskokwim Bay subsistence fisheries in the Goodnews and Kanektok Rivers. These projects also serve as important platforms for ongoing Dolly Varden char research being conducted by the Togiak NWR.

Table 2. Kuskokwim Region project costs, by organization, for investigation plans submitted to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for funding consideration in 2007. All investigation plans were for stock status and trends projects.

Project Number	Title	Project Costs (\$000s)			
		AK Native	State	Federal	Other
07-302	Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction		\$12.4		\$36.6
07-303	Kuskokwim River Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment		\$81.4		
07-304	Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir	\$74.5	\$80.2		
07-305	Kanektok-Goodnews River Salmon & Dolly Varden Weirs		\$100.9	\$8.0	
07-306	Kwethluk River Salmon Weir	\$75.7		\$100.4	
07-307	Tuluksak River Salmon Weir	\$52.4		\$101.6	

Table 3. Kuskokwim Region local hire and matching funds for investigation plans submitted to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for funding consideration in 2007. Abbreviations used are: ADFG=Alaska Department of Fish and Game, BC=Bue Consulting, USFWS=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Project Number	Lead	Title	Funding (\$000s)	
			Local Hire	Matching
07-302	BC	Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction		\$6.5
07-303	ADFG	Kuskokwim River Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment	\$10.4	\$43.0
07-304	ADFG	Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir	\$26.6	\$79.5
07-305	ADFG	Kanektok-Goodnews River Salmon and Dolly Varden Weirs		\$145.9
07-306	USFWS	Kwethluk River Salmon Weir	\$45.9	\$80.0
07-307	USFWS	Tuluksak River Salmon Weir	\$37.3	\$80.0

Table 4. Funding recommendations by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for Kuskokwim Region projects, 2007 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Project Number	Title	TRC	Requested Budget (\$000)		
			2007	2008	2009
07-302	Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction	Yes	\$49.0	\$56.9	\$0.0
07-303	Kuskokwim River Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment	Yes	\$81.4	\$96.0	\$99.5
07-304	Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir	Yes	\$154.7	\$161.8	\$176.1
07-305	Kanektok-Goodnews River Salmon & Dolly Varden Weirs	Yes	\$108.9	\$101.0	\$104.6
07-306	Kwethluk River Salmon Weir	Yes	\$176.2	\$187.9	\$190.4
07-307	Tuluksak River Salmon Weir	Yes	\$154.1	\$159.6	\$173.6
Total			\$724.3	\$763.2	\$744.2
Funding Guideline			\$778.0		
TRC Recommendation			\$724.3	\$763.2	\$744.2

07-307 Tuluksak River Salmon Weir. This project will support continued operations at the Tuluksak River weir to enumerate escapements of Chinook, sockeye, chum, and coho salmon.

07-302 Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction. This project will support the analysis of existing data from 1976 through 2007 to estimate spawning and total abundance of chum salmon in the Kuskokwim River using a statistical model for combining multiple data sources. In addition, the spawner-recruit relationship of Kuskokwim River chum salmon will be described to assess the influence of parental escapement abundance on variations in return.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

The Technical Review Committee recommends funding all six projects under consideration in the Kuskokwim Region at a cost of \$724,300, well within the funding guideline for the region. The six projects comprise a strong Monitoring Plan for this region that addresses strategically important informational needs, is scientifically sound, and promotes partnerships (Table 4).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Project Number: 07-302
Project Title: Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Run Reconstruction
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Brian Bue, Bue Consulting LLC
Co-Investigator(s): Douglas Molyneaux, ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries
Cost: 2007: \$49,015 **2008:** \$56,398 **2009:** \$0

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

The status of chum salmon populations within the Kuskokwim River drainage has been of concern in recent years due to apparently low run abundance. The Alaska Board of Fisheries identified Kuskokwim River chum salmon as a stock of concern in November 2000, and enacted regulations to reduce fishing opportunity in all fisheries so more chum salmon could escape to spawn. Reliable information on the numbers of salmon returning by year is essential if researchers are going to understand the mechanisms that drive variation of salmon abundance. This information is a prerequisite to investigating the effects of subsistence management actions, historical exploitation rates, long-term consequences of harvest practices, and the likelihood that projected abundance levels can sustain future harvests.

University of Alaska researchers began to approach the problem of reconstructing past returns by developing a statistical model which incorporated historical information (1976–1999) to estimate the magnitude of past chum salmon returns. The project showed promise but suffered because of insufficient information on salmon escapement. Numerous new projects to enumerate salmon escapement have been in place since the late 1990s and there is a strong chance that this new data will provide the needed resolution to allow the model to work properly. This project will build upon previous work by drawing in information from escapement and mark-recapture projects collected since 1999. Objectives of this project have been identified as high priority information needs by the Kuskokwim Fisheries Resource Coalition in the recent draft Gap Analysis for the Kuskokwim Area Salmon Research Plan.

OBJECTIVES

1. Estimate spawning and total abundance of chum salmon in the Kuskokwim River from 1976 through 2007 using a statistical model for combining multiple data sources.
2. Develop brood year tables for Kuskokwim chum salmon for the years 1976 through 2007 by combining the abundance estimates with estimates of age composition obtained from the subsistence and commercial fisheries as well as escapement enumeration projects.
3. Estimate the stock-recruitment relationship for the Kuskokwim River chum salmon population using the brood table developed in Objective 2 and the Ricker and Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment models.

METHODS

Total chum salmon abundance and escapement into the Kuskokwim River for return years 1976 through 2007 will be estimated using statistical models similar to those developed by University of Alaska researchers for estimating historical chum salmon abundance in the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. Our strategy will use all historic data related to abundance; including: subsistence catch numbers, catch numbers and rates from the inriver commercial fisheries, test fishery catch rates, weir counts, aerial surveys, sonar counts, and mark-recapture estimates. While no one of these abundance indices is likely to provide a reliable estimate of historical drainage wide abundance or escapement, when used in aggregate, they should provide a reasonably accurate estimate. We will combine these indices of abundance using multivariate statistical tools and a maximum likelihood estimation framework. The abundance and escapement estimates will be combined with all available data on salmon age composition to estimate brood tables for the Kuskokwim River chum salmon stock. Brood table information will then be used to estimate the stock-recruitment relationship for the drainage.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

Organizations that provide data processed by this project include Kuskokwim Native Association, Organized Village of Kwethluk, Orutsararmiut Native Council, Takotna Tribal Council, Tuluksak Traditional Council, ADFG Commercial Fisheries Division, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office; Yukon Delta and Togiak National Wildlife Refuges). In December 2005, this project was reviewed and supported by the Kuskokwim Fisheries Resources Coalition, a group that includes representatives from the ADFG Subsistence Division, ADFG Commercial Fisheries Division, the Association of Village Council Presidents, Kuskokwim Native Association, Orutsararmiut Native Council, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS Fisheries Information Services, and others.

JUSTIFICATION

The investigators propose analysis of existing data from 1976 through 2007 to estimate spawning and total abundance of chum salmon in the Kuskokwim River using a statistical model for combining multiple data sources; and to describe the spawner-recruit relationship of Kuskokwim River chum salmon assessing the influence of parental escapement abundance on variations in return. The proposed work would address an important research question and potentially could introduce innovative methodologies and management tools for Kuskokwim River chum salmon fisheries.

Project Number: 07-303
Project Title: Kuskokwim Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Douglas Molyneaux ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries

Cost: 2007: \$81,440 **2008:** \$96,010 **2009:** \$99,510

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

A number of projects have been funded through Fisheries Information Service to monitor salmon escapements and subsistence harvest, and most include collection of samples used to estimate salmon age, sex, and length (ASL) compositions. In 2005, ASL data were collected from 30,000 escapement samples, commercial and subsistence harvests, and the Bethel test fishery. This project provides the support required to process these ASL samples, compile the information, and provide consistent analysis of results to managers, project leaders and the public. The ASL information is used in a variety of ways including forecasting future run abundance, assessing effects of harvest methods, determining spawner-recruit relationships, studying causes of variation in freshwater and marine growth, and assessing many other short-term and long-term population trends.

OBJECTIVES

1. Estimate the age-sex-length (ASL) composition of Chinook, chum, and coho salmon samples collected from fisheries, escapements, and other Monitoring Program funded projects in the Kuskokwim Area.
2. Standardize ASL sampling throughout the Kuskokwim Area by providing sampling kits and instructions for measuring salmon length, sex determination, and collection of scales to all projects collecting ASL data in the Kuskokwim Area.
3. Standardize age determination of Kuskokwim Area salmon from scales by processing all collected scales at a central lab in Anchorage ADF&G with scale-ageing standardization across AYK.
4. Provide electronic and physical sample storage for project ASL data by loading ALS data into a central database and filing physical records (scales, acetates, data collection forms) in Anchorage (merging with data collected since 1961).
5. Provide access ASL data to researchers and public through responding to data requests for physical and electronic records of age and growth.

METHODS

Participants will deliver salmon ASL samples to the principal investigator. Samples will be from subsistence and commercial fisheries, as well as Kuskokwim River Region stock status and trends projects operated by various Federal, State and Tribal groups. Salmon scales will be manually processed

and aged, and ASL data will be electronically processed with standard computer programs to provide summaries of harvest and escapements partitioned into age, sex, and length categories. A local hire fish and wildlife technician will be employed through Work Place Alaska hiring procedures to assist with ASL processing during the summer months. Summary information will be provided to various contributing project leaders and to participating subsistence harvest samplers.

PARTNERSHIP/CAPACITY BUILDING

The *Kuskokwim Salmon Age-Sex-Length Assessment* project is integrated into several Monitoring Program funded projects. Some of the organizations that will directly benefit from the project include ADFG Commercial Fisheries Division, ADFG Sport Fish Division, ADFG Subsistence Division, Association of Village Council Presidents, Kuskokwim Native Association, Organized Village of Kwethluk, Orutsarmiut Native Council, Native Village of Kwinhagak, Takotna Tribal Council, Tuluksak Traditional Council, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. All of these groups have projects that include the collection of salmon ASL samples and depend on ADFG Commercial Fisheries Division for processing samples.

JUSTIFICATION

The proposed work addresses an important research and monitoring needed by supporting standardization and quality control for the collection, analysis and documentation of analysis techniques for use by the fishery managers. This information is used to monitor sex, age and size composition of commercial, subsistence fisheries and escapement projects; develop brood tables to assess management actions, develop run strength outlooks, and describe spawner recruit relationships.

Project Number: 07-304
Project Title: Tatlawiksuk River Salmon Weir
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Douglas Molyneaux,, ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries
Co-Investigator(s): David Orabutt, Kuskokwim Native Association
Dan Costello, ADFG

Cost: 2007: \$154,665 **2008:** \$161,777 **2009:** \$176,134

RECOMMENDATION: **Fund**

ISSUE

Tatlawiksuk River salmon contribute to subsistence, commercial, and recreational fisheries within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. The status of salmon populations within the drainage, including Tatlawiksuk River, has been of concern due to low run abundance. Tatlawiksuk River weir is one of several projects used to develop reliable estimates of abundance, run timing, stock structure, productivity, and carrying capacity of salmon stocks in the Kuskokwim Region, which is identified by Office of Subsistence Management as a priority information need. The project provides fundamental escapement information necessary to facilitate in-season management decisions and to assess trends in salmon populations. This project is essential as a platform for several other projects and for developing escapement goals as is currently in consideration. This project also incorporates substantial capacity building and outreach components.

Salmon escapements to Tatlawiksuk River weir have been monitored successfully since 1999. Information from this project has become integrated into the annual management process, by providing insights into escapement and stock specific run timing through the fishery. The escapement age, sex, and length information collected at Tatlawiksuk River provides part of the context needed to assess the impacts of subsistence harvest practices (*Age, Sex, and Length Composition of Lower Kuskokwim River Subsistence Chinook Harvest*, FIS #04-354).

OBJECTIVES

1. Determine daily and total annual Chinook, chum, and coho salmon escapements to Tatlawiksuk River from 15 June to 20 September;
2. Estimate age, sex, and length composition of annual Chinook, chum, and coho salmon escapements;
3. Monitor habitat variables including daily water temperature, water level, and stream discharge;
4. Provide mentorship and administer education curriculum to Kuskokwim Native Association high school interns; and,
5. Serve as a platform to facilitate current and future fisheries research projects.

METHODS

Investigators will install a resistance board weir on the lower Tatlawiksuk River. A live trap will be used to sample salmon for scales, sex and length information, and for tag recovery. Investigators will also record daily water temperature, water level, and weather conditions. A local technician hired by the Kuskokwim Native Association will operate the project along with a lead crew member provided by ADFG. The project will also serve as a platform to host students from the Kuskokwim Native Association Student Internship Program.

PARTNERSHIP/CAPACITY BUILDING

Kuskokwim Native Association and ADFG have been cooperators on salmon escapement enumeration projects on the George and Tatlawiksuk Rivers since 1996 and 1998, respectively. Oversight of field operations is shared between the Kuskokwim Native Association and ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries. ADFG takes the lead in data management, data analysis and reporting; however, more of this responsibility is expected to shift to the Kuskokwim Native Association. This budget also includes approximately \$25,000 annual funding support for ADFG senior scientists, and \$16,000 annual funding support for the Kuskokwim Native Association senior scientists.

JUSTIFICATION

The Tatlawiksuk River weir is an established and successful cooperative project operated by Kuskokwim Native Association and ADFG. The project provides valuable escapement and biological sampling data for salmon stocks in an important sub basin of the Kuskokwim River, promotes local involvement, and develops the capacity of Kuskokwim Native Association to monitor fish populations.

Project Number: 07-305
Project Title: Kanektok — Goodnews River Salmon Run Assessment Projects
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: John Linderman, ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries
Co-Investigator(s): Edward Mark, Native Village of Kwinhagak
Mark Lisac, USFWS Togiak National Wildlife Refuge

Cost: 2007: \$108,900 **2008:** \$101,000 **2009:** \$104,600

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

This proposal will fund the operations of two resistance-board weirs currently utilized on the Kanektok and Goodnews Rivers (funding here is requested to extend the operational period for the Goodnews River weir to better enumerate coho salmon stocks). Both of these projects enumerate all five species of salmon found in Alaska, as well as, Dolly Varden. Escapement information and biological data collected at these projects are valuable for setting escapement objectives, determining run timing, assessing the age structure of the returns, and enumerating adult salmon spawners.

OBJECTIVES

1. Enumerate daily and annual total passage of Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon, and Dolly Varden through the Kanektok and Middle Fork Goodnews River weirs.
2. Describe the run-timing or proportional daily passage of Kanektok River Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon and Middle Fork Goodnews River coho salmon.
3. Estimate the sex, age, and length composition of Kanektok River Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon escapements and Middle Fork Goodnews River coho salmon escapement such that simultaneous 90% confidence intervals have maximum width of 0.20.
4. Monitor environmental variables at the project sites such as relative water level, discharge rate, and water temperature.

METHODS

A resistance-board weir will be installed in the Kanektok and Goodnews Rivers to enumerate passage of the five species of salmon found in Alaska and Dolly Varden. The projects will also act as a platform for the collection of biological samples (age-sex-length, genetics, scales, etc.). This information will be used to assess the returns to these systems.

PARTNERSHIPS/CAPACITY BUILDING

Goodnews weir will be staffed by two ADFG Fish and Wildlife Technicians and one local hire USFWS Fisheries Technician.

The Kanektok River weir is operated cooperatively by ADFG, Native Village of Kwinhagak, and USFWS Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

Regular consultations between ADFG, the Native Village of Kwinhagak, USFWS, CVRF and local stake holders will occur throughout the year to coordinate logistics, discuss results, and exchange ideas.

JUSTIFICATION

The Goodnews and Kanektok River weirs are established and successful monitoring projects that provide the primary escapement and run strength data used to ensure sustainability of Kuskokwim Bay subsistence fisheries and conserve fisheries stocks in the Goodnews and Kanektok Rivers. This proposal would support continued operations of both the Kanektok and Goodnews River weirs for a complete field season enumerating escapements of Chinook, sockeye, chum and coho salmon. These projects also serve as important platforms for ongoing Dolly Varden char research being conducted by the Togiak NWR.

Project Number: 07-306
Project Title: Kwethluk River Salmon Weir
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Ken Harper, USFWS Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office
Co-Investigator(s): Native Village of Kwethluk

Cost: **2007:** \$176,157 **2008:** \$187,863 **2009:** \$190,403

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Management of Kuskokwim Area salmon fisheries is complex because of annual variability in run size and timing, harvesting of mixed stocks, overlapping runs of multiple species, allocation issues, and the immense size of the Kuskokwim River drainage. Fishery managers need salmon escapement data from representative rivers that contribute to this complex mixed stock subsistence fishery. Investigators will collect data on chum, Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon.

OBJECTIVES

1. Enumerate the daily passage of Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon and resident fish species through the weir.
2. Describe the run-timing or proportional daily passage of Chinook, chum, pink, sockeye, and coho salmon through the weir.
3. Estimate the weekly sex and age composition of Chinook, chum, and coho salmon such that simultaneous 90% confidence intervals have a maximum width of 0.20.
4. Estimate the mean length of Chinook, chum and coho salmon by sex and age.
5. Enumerate the number of Chinook, chum, pink, sockeye, and coho salmon carcasses that wash down onto the weir each day.
6. Monitor passage of any salmon (Chinook, chum, sockeye and coho salmon) that may be tagged in middle Kuskokwim River mark recapture studies.

METHODS

Investigators will install a resistance board weir across the Kwethluk River, 78 river kilometers upstream from the Kuskokwim River. Salmon will be counted as they pass through a counting chute located on a live trap. Weekly samples of length, sex, and scales will be collected from fish passing up stream, and gill net marks will be noted before releasing sampled fish up-stream from the weir. Local technicians hired by the Organized Village of Kwethluk will be trained by the Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office in weir operations and biological sample collection methodology.

PARTNERSHIP/CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building will continue, as the USFWS mentors and trains 3–5 village technicians in project operations. This project reaches the cooperation level of capacity building (level 5) and potentially could fully become a partnership of equals between the USFWS and the Organized Village of Kwethluk. We have developed a formal agreement that has been signed by both parties committing the Service to making it a priority to train village personnel for crew and possible leaders. Under this signed agreement, the village has agreed to recruiting technicians with the understanding that they will be expected to follow a set work schedule to ensure proper function of the project. The village will also have technicians available to assist with and learn the process of installation and removal of the weir. They will participate in the operation and collection of escapement data. This will provide an educational basis for employees and the village government to further their understanding of the management of lower Kuskokwim River commercial and subsistence fisheries.

In partnership with the Association of Village Council Presidents and their Partners Biologist the Kenai Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office office is currently working with Association of Village Council Presidents and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and planning for hosting science camp students at the weir in 2006 and beyond. The Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office will provide biologists to mentor students when they spend time at the fish weir. It is expected that the Partners Biologist will be available to work at the weir when needed to expand their understanding of the weir. This educational mentoring will be crucial in developing future village weir technicians, crew leaders, and biologists at these projects.

JUSTIFICATION

The Kwethluk River weir is an established and successful monitoring project that provides escapement and run strength data used to ensure sustainability of subsistence fisheries and conserve fisheries stocks in the Kwethluk River. There is a strong Federal Nexus with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge; and the Kwethluk River salmon stocks are harvested by a large lower river subsistence fishery, and pass through a commercial fishing district between the Kuskokwim and the Kwethluk River mouths.

Project Number: 07-307
Project Title: Salmon Run Timing and Abundance in the Tuluksak River
Geographic Region: Kuskokwim
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Ken Harper, USFWS Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office
Co-Investigator(s): Tuluksak Native Community

Cost: 2007: \$154,061 **2008:** \$159,574 **2009:** \$173,610

RECOMMENDATION: Fund

ISSUE

Management of Kuskokwim Area salmon fisheries is complex because of annual variability in run size and timing, harvesting of mixed stocks, overlapping runs of multiple species, allocation issues, and the immense size of the Kuskokwim River drainage. Fishery managers need salmon escapement data from representative rivers that contribute to this complex mixed stock subsistence fishery. Investigators will collect data on chum, Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon.

OBJECTIVES

1. Enumerate the daily passage of Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon and resident fish species through the weir.
2. Describe the run-timing or proportional daily passage of Chinook, chum, pink, sockeye, and coho salmon through the weir.
3. Estimate the weekly sex and age composition of Chinook, chum, and coho salmon such that simultaneous 90% confidence intervals have a maximum width of 0.20.
4. Estimate the mean length of Chinook, chum and coho salmon by sex and age.
5. Enumerate the number of Chinook, chum, pink, sockeye, and coho salmon carcasses that wash down onto the weir each day.
6. Monitor passage of any salmon (Chinook, chum, sockeye and coho salmon) that may be tagged in middle Kuskokwim River mark recapture studies.

METHODS

Investigators will install a resistance board weir across the Tuluksak River 49 river kilometers (rkm) upstream from the confluence with the Kuskokwim River. Salmon will be counted as they pass through a counting chute located on a live trap. Weekly samples of length, sex, and scales will be collected from fish passing up stream, and gill net marks will be noted before releasing sampled fish up-stream from the weir. Local technicians hired by the Tuluksak Native Community will be trained by the Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office in weir operations and biological sample collection methodology.

PARTNERSHIP/CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building will continue, as the USFWS mentors and trains 3–5 village technicians in project operations. This project reaches the cooperation level of capacity building (level 5) and potentially could fully become a partnership of equals between the USFWS and the Tuluksak Native Community. We have developed a formal agreement that has been signed by both parties committing the Service to making it a priority to train village personnel for crew and possible leaders. Under this signed agreement, the village has agreed to recruiting technicians with the understanding that they will be expected to follow a set work schedule to ensure proper function of the project. The village will also have technicians available to assist with and learn the process of installation and removal of the weir. They will participate in the operation and collection of escapement data. This will provide an educational basis for employees and the village government to further their understanding of the management of lower Kuskokwim River commercial and subsistence fisheries.

In partnership with the Association of Village Council Presidents and their Partners Biologist the Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office is currently working with the Association of Village Council Presidents and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and planning for hosting science camp students at the weir in 2006 and beyond. The Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office will provide biologists to mentor students when they spend time at the fish weir. It is expected that the Partners Biologist will be available to work at the weir when needed to expand their understanding of the weir. This educational mentoring will be crucial in developing future village weir technicians, crew leaders, and biologists at these projects.

JUSTIFICATION

The Tuluksak River weir is an established and successful monitoring project that provides the escapement and run strength data used to ensure sustainability and conservation of fisheries stocks in the Kuskokwim River. There is a strong federal nexus with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge; and the Tuluksak River salmon stocks are harvested by a large lower river subsistence fishery, and pass through a commercial fishing district between the Kuskokwim and the Kwethluk river mouths.



Federal Subsistence Board

3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

JUN 27 2006

FOREST SERVICE

FWS/OSM/BB805cLtr

Mr. Harry O. Wilde Sr., Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
Post Office Box 32226
Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Dear Mr. Wilde:

Enclosed with this letter is a report of the Federal Subsistence Board's actions at the May 16-18, 2006, meeting regarding proposed changes to subsistence wildlife regulations. The Board used a consensus agenda on those proposals where the Council, the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game were in agreement. The Board adopted the consensus agenda at the conclusion of the meeting. Details of these actions and the Board's actual deliberations are contained in the meeting transcripts. Transcripts are online at the Office of Subsistence Management website, <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.htm>, and copies may be obtained by calling our toll free number, 1-800-478-1456.

The Federal Subsistence Board appreciates the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's active involvement in and diligence with the regulatory process. The ten Regional Advisory Councils continue to be the foundation of the Federal Subsistence Program, and the stewardship shown by the Regional Advisory Council Chairs and their representatives at the Board meeting was noteworthy.

If you have any questions regarding the summary of the Board's actions, please contact your Regional Council Coordinator, Alex Nick, at 1-800-621-5804 or 583-1037.

Sincerely,

S/S Mitch Demientieff

Mitch Demientieff, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

Enclosure

cc: YKDSRAC
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Team, OSM
Coastal Division Chief, OSM
FACA Coordinator, OSM

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD ACTION REPORT
May 16-18, 2006
Anchorage

STATE-WIDE PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL WP06-01

DESCRIPTION: Restrict the commercial sales and purchase of handicrafts made from bear byproducts. An individual may not sell handicrafts made from black or brown bear claws to an entity operating as a business as defined by Alaska Statute 43.70.110(1) and no business as defined under that statute may purchase such handicrafts made from black or brown bear claws, unless the bear was taken in Units 1-5. The sale of handicrafts made from the non-edible byproducts of black and brown bears may not constitute a significant commercial enterprise. Submitted by the Federal Subsistence Board.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Southeast Alaska: Oppose.

Southcentral Alaska: Oppose. The Council unanimously opposed the proposal stating that the burden of proof should not be on the subsistence users.

Kodiak/Aleutians: Support with modification. The Council was concerned about potential for abuse if the sale of handicrafts made from bear claws was allowed. The resource and local communities could suffer from over harvest of bears due to the allowed sales of handicrafts made from bear claws. There are many legal points to consider and a lack of the ability to track any sales. Only trade, barter, and sharing should be allowed. The resource is too valuable to subject to potential problems involved with sales.

Bristol Bay: Oppose. The Council did not hear any biological information conveying to them that there is a conservation concern of too many bears being harvested. The Council heard concerns from other user groups that after the Board had approved a portion of the proposal which allowed the use of claws in handicrafts that brown bear harvests would increase. Brown bear harvests have not increased. The Council also stated that sport hunters may go out and harvest a brown bear, then have it tanned out of the hunt area without any restrictions placed upon them. Therefore, Council members felt the restrictions in WP06-01 would be a burden to subsistence users.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council honors the beliefs and cultures from other parts of Alaska. Bear claws are used for handicrafts and skin sewing. There is a desire to maintain traditional sales opportunity, while preventing commercialization of sales. There is a desire to be able to display handicrafts in village stores for sales by the person that produced the handicraft.

Western Interior Alaska: Support with the modification to remove the Southeast exemption for Units 1-5. Because of the Western Interior Region's cultural beliefs, the Council defers to the

home regions. There are concerns about commercialization of sales, the impact on the bear resources, and the need to restrict the sale of bear parts. Passage of the Council's recommendation would remove commercial incentives for harvesting bears thereby providing additional protection from over harvest of bear populations. Removal of the proposed Southeast exception is necessary because of the difficulty of enforcing such a regulation.

Seward Peninsula: Oppose.

Northwest Arctic: Support with modification. The Council voted to support the proposal with modification to remove the Southeast exemption.

Eastern Interior Alaska: Support with modification to remove the Southeast exemption for Units 1-5 with the additional modification to remove reference to black bears. The Council wanted regulations that avoid commercialization and incentives to kill bears just to sell their claws. Sale of bear parts is a sensitive issue in some Native cultures. There is a need for measures with some controls. The Council wants subsistence users to be able to fully utilize the harvested resource. There is not a resource problem at this time. If there are problems in the future, the Council can address them at that time.

North Slope: Support with modification to remove the Southeast exemption. Removal of the proposed Southeast exception is necessary because of the difficulty of enforcing such a regulation. Allowing commercial sales of bear claw handicrafts made from bears taken in any part of the State, without a tracking system, will have a significantly detrimental affect on the ability of enforcement officers to differentiate between legitimate sales and the commercial sale of products from poached bears, bears harvested under State regulations and bears harvested under Federal regulations in Eastern Interior and Bristol Bay Regions.

The modified proposed regulation should read: ***____.25(j)8(a) You may not sell handicrafts made from the claws of a black or brown bear to an entity operating as a business as defined in Alaska Statute 43.70.110(1). ____25(j)8(b) If you are a business as defined under Alaska Statute 43.70.110(1) you may not purchase handicrafts made from the claws of a black or brown bear as part of your business transactions. ____25(j)8(c) The sale of handicrafts made from the nonedible by products of black and brown bears, when authorized in this part, may not constitute a significant commercial enterprise.***

BOARD ACTION: Reject, as recommended by the Bristol Bay, Seward Peninsula, Southcentral Alaska and Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, but contrary to the recommendations of the other six Councils.

JUSTIFICATION: There is currently no evidence of a problem with commercial sales of bear claw handicrafts and it would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs by creating these regulations unnecessarily. They further stated that if a problem becomes evident in the future they can address the issue with new regulations at that time. The restrictions on sales becoming a significant commercial enterprise, which the Board adopted as part of WP06-02, however, will apply to bear handicrafts as well as handicrafts made from nonedible byproducts of all other wildlife.

PROPOSAL WP06-02

DESCRIPTION: Provide for sale of handicrafts made from non-edible byproducts of wildlife harvested for subsistence uses (excluding bear) to include skin, hide, pelt, fur, claws, bones (except skulls of moose, caribou, elk, deer, bear, sheep, goat and muskox), teeth, sinew, antlers and/or horns (if not attached to any part of the skull or made to represent a big game trophy) and hooves. Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Southeast Alaska: Support

Southcentral Alaska: Support with modification. The Council supported the proposal with an amendment to strike §__.25(?). The Council discussed that the current language is vague. The burden of proof should not be left with subsistence users and additional control over sales should be clearly defined.

Kodiak/Aleutians: Support with modification to remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language, to provide needed definitions of the terms big game and trophy, and to prohibit sales from constituting a significant commercial enterprise. This proposal, as modified, would satisfy subsistence needs and allows traditional practices.

Bristol Bay: Support with modification. The Council recommends that the Board remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language, provide definitions of the terms big game and trophy, and prohibit sales from constituting a significant commercial enterprise (consistent with the sale of bear claw handicrafts). This practice is currently allowed by State regulation for wildlife harvested under the State's general hunting provisions; however it is currently prohibited for wildlife harvested under Federal subsistence regulations. Adoption of these new regulations will provide Federally qualified subsistence hunters the same opportunities that are currently available to those harvesting under State regulations, and it would accommodate existing practices. This Federal regulation addresses handicrafts only, consistent with the definition of subsistence uses in ANILCA Section 803.

The modified proposed regulation should read: §__.25(j)(9) *If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user, you may sell handicraft articles made from non edible byproducts of wildlife harvested for subsistence uses (excluding bear) to include; skin, hide, pelt, fur, claws, bones (except skulls of moose, caribou, elk, deer, sheep, goat and muskox), teeth, sinew, antlers and/or horns (if not attached to any part of the skull or made to represent a big game trophy) and hooves. §__.25(a) Definitions. "big game" means black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, muskox, Dall sheep, wolf, and wolverine; "trophy" means a mount of a big game animal, including the skin of the head (cape) or the entire skin, in a lifelike representation of the animal, including a lifelike representation made from any part of a big game animal; "trophy" also includes a "European mount" in which the horns or antlers and the skull or a portion of the skull are mounted for display; §__.25(?) The sale of handicrafts made from the non-edible byproducts of wildlife, when authorized in this part, may not constitute a significant commercial enterprise.*

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support. This would allow subsistence users to continue traditional practices.

Western Interior Alaska: Support with modification to remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language. The Council supports the adoption of this proposal, as modified, because the practice is currently allowed by State regulation while currently it is prohibited under Federal subsistence regulations. Adoption of this proposal with the modifications, would provide Federally qualified subsistence hunters the same opportunities that are currently allowed under State regulations.

Seward Peninsula: Support with modification to remove redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language, to provide needed definitions of the terms 'big game' and 'trophy', and to prohibit sales from constituting a significant commercial enterprise (consistent with the sale of bear claw handicrafts). (See the North Slope Regional Advisory Council recommendation for modified proposed regulatory language). The Council supported allowing subsistence users to sell handicraft articles made from nonedible by products of wildlife harvested for subsistence uses. This would benefit subsistence users by allowing them to fully utilize the resource and would allow this practice that is already allowed under State regulation.

Northwest Arctic: Support with modification to remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language.

Eastern Interior Alaska: Support with modification to remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language, and to allow the sale of capes, hides, and sheds as identified in State regulations. The practice is currently allowed under State regulations but prohibited for wildlife harvested under Federal regulations. Adoption of this proposal would provide the same opportunity that currently exists under State regulations. The Council had concerns about not being able to sell capes, hides, and shed horns. Many subsistence hunters currently sell capes and hides. Federal regulations need to align with State regulations and allow the sale of capes, hides, and sheds. This would allow full utilization of the resource.

North Slope: Support with modification to remove the redundant reference to bear in the regulatory language. The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council voted to modify the proposed regulation as follows: *____.25(j)(9) If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user, you may sell handicraft articles made from nonedible byproducts of wildlife harvested for subsistence uses (excluding bear) to include; skin, hide, pelt, fur, claws, bones, (except skulls of moose, caribou, elk, deer, sheep, goat and muskox), teeth, sinew, antlers and/or horns (if not attached to any part of the skull or made to represent a big game trophy) and hooves. _____.25(a) Definitions: "big game" means black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, muskox, Dall sheep, wolf, and wolverine; "trophy" means a mount of a big game animal, including the skin of the head (cape) or the entire skin, in a lifelike representation of the animal, including a lifelike representation made from any part of a big game animal; "trophy" also includes a "European mount" in which the horns or antlers and the skull or a portion of the skull are mounted for display; _____.25(?) The sale of handicrafts made from the nonedible byproducts of wildlife, when authorized in this part, may not constitute a significant commercial enterprise.*

BOARD ACTION: Adopt with modification to remove the redundant references and to provide definitions of the terms “big game” and “trophy” currently lacking in Federal regulations, as recommended by the North Slope, Bristol Bay, Seward Peninsula, Southeast Alaska, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Northwest Arctic, Western Interior, and Kodiak-Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

JUSTIFICATION: This practice is currently allowed by State regulations for wildlife harvested under the State’s general hunting provisions. Adoption of these new handicraft regulations will provide Federally qualified subsistence hunters the same opportunities that are currently available to those harvesting under state regulations, and it would accommodate existing practices.

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA REGION

PROPOSAL WP06-27

DESCRIPTION: Establish a Controlled Use Area in a portion of Unit 18 for Federally qualified subsistence moose hunters. Submitted by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support. There are local concerns about aerial moose spotting in Unit 18. Residents within the proposal area feel that spotting moose from an aircraft creates an unfair advantage over rural users who do not practice this method for locating moose during the moose season. Subsistence users in this area travel by land and by water; spotting by aircraft will not be fair for those harvesting by land and water. We need to maintain the abundance of moose in this area by restricting access.

Western Interior Alaska: Took no action.

BOARD ACTION: Reject, contrary to the recommendation of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

JUSTIFICATION: There is no conservation concern in the proposed area and moose populations in the area are healthy according to agency reports. The moose population in the area is still growing. Adoption of this proposal would only restrict Federally-qualified users who may wish to hunt moose in the area. Restriction of aircraft use in the area for moose hunting would restrict Federally-qualified users who own private aircraft and may wish to reach the area to harvest moose. This would be ineffective to achieve the objectives of the Regional Advisory Council. Moose hunters would be able to use aircraft to access land and water under the State regulations within the State jurisdiction. There is no advantage to Federally-qualified hunters if this proposal is adopted.

PROPOSAL WP06-28

DESCRIPTION: In Unit 18-Remainder, replace the 10-day season, which is opened by announcement, with a set season from December 20—January 10. Submitted by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support.

Western Interior Alaska: Took no action.

BOARD ACTION: Adopt as recommended by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Interagency Staff Committee and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

JUSTIFICATION: This proposal was on the consensus agenda.

PROPOSAL WP06-29

DESCRIPTION: In Unit 18-remainder, expand the harvest limit for moose in the December 20—January 10 winter season to include calves. Submitted by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support with modification to delegate the authority to close the calf season to the National Wildlife Refuge Manager and add “with its mother” after the word “calf”. Calf is described as an ungulate still with its mother. Regulatory wording should add “with its mother” after the word calf.

Western Interior Alaska: Took no action.

BOARD ACTION: Adopt with modification as recommended by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council recommendation, except the Board adopted the State's definition of calf.

JUSTIFICATION: Some local people may prefer to harvest a calf that is not accompanied by a cow moose and local people have experience to tell the difference between a twelve-month old calf and one less than twelve months. Information previously provided indicated the moose population in the area is stable and is able to support harvest of calves in order to control additional moose population growth. If it becomes necessary, the Refuge Manager of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife will have the authority to close the calf season, and restrict the harvest to one antlered bull, after consultation with the State.

PROPOSAL WP06-30

DESCRIPTION: Open Federal public lands in Unit 18-remainder to non-Federally qualified moose hunters, except that the 10-day winter season will remain closed to non-Federally qualified hunters. Submitted by Henry S. Powers III of Bethel.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Oppose. The Council opposes this proposal because we need to listen to our Elders. Many people from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta's Yukon River area have expressed concerns about this proposal. People of the lower Yukon share. There is a concern that the needs of the lower Yukon villages are not met. There are concerns about the changing environment and the stability of the moose population. There are concerns about people of the lower Yukon being able to get enough moose to feed their families into the future.

Western Interior Alaska: Took no action.

BOARD ACTION: Defer, contrary to the recommendation of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

JUSTIFICATION: Deferring this proposal allows an opportunity to dialogue with affected users in the area on the reasons to remove the closure. The Board respects and recognizes the efforts that local residents have made while they worked toward building moose populations to abundant numbers. The Board needs to be careful on what implications any of its decision might have on other portions of Unit 18, where other users have made equal sacrifices on similar issues.

CROSSOVER PROPOSALS**PROPOSAL WP06-34**

DESCRIPTION: In Units 21A, 21B, 21D, 21E, and Unit 24, extend the fall moose season to close October 1. Submitted by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Western Interior Alaska: Support the proposal with the modification to apply the extended fall moose season dates to Units 21B and 24 Federal lands north and east of, but not including, the Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge, and to require a Federal registration permit for the March 1—5 season. This would allow moose hunting opportunity in the fall for bull moose where the moose populations can support that additional, but limited, harvest. The bull:cow ratio data for Unit 21B and the portion of Unit 24 show these areas can support this later, limited fall harvest. In addition, the winter cow moose seasons have been restricted for conservation concerns and elevated fuel costs have limited travel and hunter effort. The Council's recommendation provides for economy of subsistence harvest where it can be supported biologically.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Oppose. The Yukon-Innoko Moose Management Working Group and the State's GASH Fish and Game Advisory Committee did not support this proposal for Units 21A and 21E.

Eastern Interior Alaska: Support the proposal with the modification to extend the fall season to October 1 for Unit 21B – that portion of the Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge. The environment is changing and warming is occurring. Moose do not start moving until late September. Many subsistence hunters have not been able to get their moose during the current season. Moose are rutting later and later. The Council felt the regulations need to provide an opportunity for subsistence users to feed their family where the resource can support it.

North Slope: Support with modification to apply the extended fall moose season dates to Unit 24—Federal public lands north and east of, but not including the Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge. The Council made no recommendations for Units 21A, 21B, 21D, and 21E.

BOARD ACTION: Adopt with modification as recommended by the Western Interior and the North Slope Regional Advisory Councils, to provide an October 1 season extensions for those portions of Unit 24 north and east of, but not including, the Koyukuk CUA or Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge. The Board also aligned Federal regulations based on recent Alaska Board of Game actions that eliminated the State's December 1—10 season and added an August 22—31 season in Units 21B and 21D. A Federal registration permit will be implemented for the March 1—5 season for that portion of Unit 24B, north of the Koyukuk River except the John River drainage.

JUSTIFICATION: This action will provide additional hunting opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence hunters. Moose survey data indicate that these areas could support an additional but limited harvest during the six-day extension to October 1. The Board's action included a Federal registration permit for the March 1—5 season for Unit 24B north of the Koyukuk River except the John River drainage. A registration permit will allow Federal land managers to closely monitor antlerless moose harvest in accordance with the management objectives.

PROPOSAL WP06-37

DESCRIPTION: Close the summer caribou season in areas of Unit 22 where reindeer occur. Submitted by the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION/JUSTIFICATION:

Seward Peninsula: Support with modification, to change the boundary language to align with language adopted by the Alaska Board of Game during its November 2005 meeting.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Support with modification. Hunters from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta do not hunt this area until October 1. There is broad support for this proposal.

BOARD ACTION: Adopt with modification as recommended by the Seward Peninsula and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

JUSTIFICATION: This proposal was on the consensus agenda.



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

Federal Subsistence Board

3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



FOREST SERVICE

FWS/FSB/OSM/YKDareplies

Mr. Harry O. Wilde Sr., Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
Post Office Box 32226
Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Dear Mr. Wilde:

This letter responds to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's 2005 Annual Report. The Federal Subsistence Board appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report and values the opportunity to review the issues brought forward concerning your region. Annual Reports allow the Board to become more aware of the issues which fall outside the regulatory proposal process and affect subsistence users in your region.

The responsibility to respond to these reports has been delegated to the Board by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. The Board has reviewed your Annual Report and offers the following responses:

Issue 1: Potential Impacts of Donlin Creek Mining Operations near Crooked Creek

The Council has concerns about the plans being made for the Donlin Creek Mine explorations and mining operations by the Calista Corporation and its partner Placer Dome Mining Company. The Council is quite concerned about the potential adverse impacts from exploration and mining on subsistence resources and water quality in the Kuskokwim River drainage. Another concern is riverbank erosion. It is estimated that at least two barges will be operating in the Kuskokwim River per day to support the Donlin Creek mine. The wake of each barge is tremendous and is likely to cause some erosion problems in parts of the Kuskokwim River. In just one summer, subsistence salmon gillnet fishing sites could be totally eliminated in some areas by these changing sandbars and channels. These changes could affect subsistence activities that are very important to low income families.

Response

The lead Federal agency to conduct any environmental assessments and impact studies and to write the Environmental Impact Statement on the Donlin Creek gold mining project will likely be the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These agencies will consult with

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the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which will review the impacts and effects on fish, wildlife, and habitat, including subsistence resources and users. Staff from the Office of Subsistence Management, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, which are all part of the FWS, will take part in that review and will ensure that the concerns and issues of Federal subsistence users are brought forth for consideration. Please note that the Office of Subsistence Management will not conduct any impact studies on its own. The State of Alaska will also conduct permitting reviews through the Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Natural Resources.

The NEPA process takes two to three years after the mining company applies for the various required permits. The NEPA process includes opportunities for public review and comment on the proposed actions. It should be noted that the NEPA process has not yet begun.

When review opportunities become available, agency staff can provide updates to the Council.

Issue 2: Life Cycles of Fish Species

The ADF&G and the FWS currently lack accurate data on the life cycles of salmon and freshwater species within spawning streams and creeks in Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region. It is important to have sufficient data on fish life cycles for the purpose of management and sound decision making within the two agencies. The Board must become fully aware of the life cycles of both salmon and non-salmon species (i.e. rainbow trout and lake trout), including their populations levels in the important spawning streams, creeks, rivers, and drainages within the Federal conservation units of each subsistence region. In the past, the Council has directed staff to obtain much needed information from the conservation unit, which apparently did not have sufficient data to satisfy the Council's request for information on important subsistence freshwater fishery resources in the region. The Council is concerned about the unmet obligations as required by ANILCA for managing subsistence resources. Because there is not sufficient data on fisheries to support some of the important Council recommendations to the Board, future adverse impacts on subsistence uses could result from the current lack of needed data.

Response

The life cycles of the various salmon species in the Yukon and Kuskokwim river drainages are fairly well known, i.e., their respective run timings, the amount of time salmon spend in both freshwater and the ocean and, for the most part, their respective spawning rivers and streams. It should be noted that several studies, including timing and abundance, weir, and escapement studies, funded by the Fisheries Information Services, Office of Subsistence Management, are either ongoing, or have been completed in the Yukon and Kuskokwim river drainages. A presentation can be prepared for your next Council meeting, if requested. Your request should include a list of specific species in which the Council is interested.

In addition, during your fall meetings, an OSM/FIS staff person, usually Richard Cannon, gives a status report to your Council on current FIS-funded projects. During those same meetings, your

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Council reviews and makes recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding which proposed harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and stock status studies and projects to fund for the upcoming year. This would be the most direct way to address your concerns.

Issue 3: Restoration of Non-Salmon Streams

The Council has been concerned about problems caused by abandoned beaver dams, some of which are approximately 50 years old, in salmon spawning streams within the Delta region. The streams, lakes, and watersheds are also important for non-salmon species spawning and survival. Beaver dams are known to trap some small fish species behind them after the water recedes. Beaver dams also cause damages to very important subsistence harvest sites, such as fyke net (taluyaq) fishing sites and furbearer trapping sites (for mink, muskrat, beaver, and land otter), in early fall, winter, and early spring. Available Federal project funds could be utilized to fund such projects for stream restoration where local users depend on specific tributaries for diet and nourishment.

Response

The Board acknowledges that there is a continuing issue with beaver dams in your region; however, issues associated with habitat are the responsibility of the local land management agency. The Board made a strategic planning and policy decision, at the onset of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in 2000, that funds would be utilized for three types of studies in the following categories; harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and stock status and trends. Stream restoration projects are a modification of habitat and do not fall within these categories.

While beaver dams may contribute to local declines in some fish populations in some of the drainages, beaver dam habitat have also been shown to provide excellent quality rearing habitat for some fish species. It should be noted that beavers are part of the natural environment and are indigenous Alaska, and construction of beaver dams in streams and rivers is a natural process.

Subsistence users have been encouraged to harvest beaver, as Federal subsistence wildlife regulations allow for beavers to be harvested year round in Unit 18, with no harvest limits.

Issue 4: Stipends versus Per Diem

Council members are volunteers and not salaried employees of the government agencies. Each Council member receives and reviews meeting booklets and a great number of government documents. All of which must be completed prior to scheduled meetings. In some cases, it becomes necessary for Council members to complete the paperwork, which usually is a large task, and return the completed documents with their signatures. Reviewing these documents requires a lot of a Council member's personal time without any compensation from the government. Council member appointments involve year-round voluntary service to the Federal and State governments. Council members participate in Council, Board, and other meetings, as they willingly sacrifice much needed time and earnings for the benefit of these government agencies. The majority of the Council members also participate in other voluntary services, such

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as on the Board of Directors of other agencies and organizations. In recognition of the rural area's uniqueness and high cost of living, some of the agencies and organizations in which Council members participate, pay stipends instead of per diem when their members attend meetings. Some organizations even do better, by paying both per diem and stipends for attending meetings.

Response

This issue has been raised in the recent past by more than one Council. The Board acknowledges your Council's points on the high cost of living in rural Alaska, and the loss of earned income while attending Council meetings.

There are over 100 Department of the Interior advisory committees throughout the United States. The Department's policy is that FACA advisory committee members will receive per diem and travel costs only. The Board does not have the authority to change this Department policy.

Please note that efforts are made right from the start to inform Council applicants that they will not receive any form of payment should they be selected to become a member of the Council. The information sheet attached to the application form for Council membership clearly states that "While Council members are not (emphasis added) paid for their volunteer service, their transportation and lodging are pre-paid, and per diem is provided for food and other expenses under Federal travel guidelines", and that Council members can expect to attend at least two meetings per year. The presumption is that Council applicants have already determined that they are willing and able to serve as a volunteer, without any form of payment, when their applications are received in the Office of Subsistence Management. This point is verified with the applicants during the interview process and reiterated by the Council Coordinators during the orientation session for new Council members.

In closing, I applaud the Council's continuing diligence in raising concerns in order to maintain healthy subsistence resources and adequate subsistence harvest opportunities. I speak for the entire Board in expressing our appreciation for your efforts and our confidence that the subsistence users of the region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,

Ronald B. McCoy, Interim Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

cc: YKDSRAC
Federal Subsistence Board
Interagency Staff Committee
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Team, OSM
FACA Coordinator, OSM

PROPOSED RULE ON THE REVIEW OF RURAL DETERMINATIONS

Action Item for Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils Fall 2006

- This is an action item for all of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The Federal Subsistence Board is seeking Council recommendations and public comments through October 27, 2006 on a proposed rule that would change the rural or nonrural status of several Alaska communities and areas.
- The proposed rule is being provided to the Councils for their reference. No changes in rural/nonrural status of communities or areas are being proposed in the Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior Alaska, Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, or Eastern Interior Alaska Council regions.
- The Board will hold public hearings in Kodiak September 20-21, in Saxman September 25, in Ketchikan September 26, and in Sitka October 10. The Board will make a decision on a final rule at a public meeting in Anchorage December 12-13. Public testimony will be taken at that meeting, and all Council Chairs are invited.
- ANILCA requires that rural Alaskans be given priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands. Only residents of rural communities and areas are eligible for this subsistence priority.
- The Board initially determined which Alaska communities were rural when the Federal Subsistence Management Program began in 1990.
- Federal subsistence regulations require that rural/nonrural status be reviewed every 10 years, beginning with the availability of the 2000 census data. An initial staff review, completed in July 2005, recommended that the rural/nonrural status of most Alaska communities should remain unchanged for the proposed rule. Comment periods were provided at earlier stages in the review process.
- The regulations require that communities or areas that are economically, socially, and communally integrated be grouped for evaluation purposes. That was the first step in the analysis, followed by evaluation of rural/nonrural status.
- For considering whether communities or areas should be grouped, the Board directed staff to report on the following three indicators: 1) proximity/road connectedness; 2) shared high school attendance area; and 3) commuting of 30% or more of the workers between places of interest.
- The regulations establish guidelines for rural and nonrural status relative to population size:
 - A community with a population below 2,500 is considered rural, unless it possesses significant characteristics of a nonrural nature or is considered to be socially and economically part of a nonrural area.
 - A community with a population of more than 7,000 is considered nonrural unless it possesses significant characteristics of a rural nature.

- A community with a population above 2,500, but not more than 7,000, is to be evaluated to determine rural/nonrural status.
- For evaluating rural/nonrural status of communities or groupings, the method was to:
 - First, categorize the community or grouping by population size relative to the population thresholds.
 - Then, evaluate community characteristics as warranted. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Diversity and development of the local economy
 - Use of fish and wildlife
 - Community infrastructure
 - Transportation
 - Educational institutions.
- Turning now to changes being proposed by the Board, **Prudhoe Bay** is proposed for change from rural to nonrural status in the North Slope Region. The Board has come to the preliminary conclusion that Prudhoe Bay is an industrial enclave built for the sole purpose of extracting oil, with no permanent residents and none of the characteristics typical of a rural community.
- In the Southcentral Alaska Region, it is proposed that communities or areas be added to the nonrural Wasilla-Palmer, Homer, and Kenai Areas, and thereby change in status from rural to nonrural, as follows:
 - **Point MacKenzie** grouped with the nonrural Wasilla-Palmer Area. Available information indicates that Point MacKenzie is economically, socially and communally integrated with the Wasilla-Palmer Area. Point MacKenzie is in proximity and road accessible to the Wasilla-Palmer Area, its students attend Wasilla High School, and 50 percent of Point MacKenzie workers commute to the Wasilla-Palmer Area for employment.
 - **Fritz Creek East** (not including Voznesenka) and the **North Fork Road area** grouped with the nonrural Homer Area. Available information indicates that these areas are economically, socially and communally integrated with the Homer Area. They are in proximity and road-connected with Homer, more than 40 percent of workers from these areas commute to the Homer Area, and most students from these areas attend Homer High School.
 - **Sterling** would be fully included in the nonrural Kenai Area. Sterling has been part of the nonrural Kenai Area since 1990. For the 2000 census, the Sterling area was expanded, such that a significant portion now extends beyond the current boundary of the Kenai Area. The Board believes that the boundaries of the Kenai Area should be adjusted to include all of Sterling. Students in Sterling go to high school in the Kenai Area, and the level of commuting is at 61.2%, well above the minimum criteria for grouping.
- In the Kodiak/Aleutians Region, changes are proposed for Adak and Kodiak, as follows:
 - Status of the community of **Adak** would change from nonrural to rural. Adak has undergone substantial change that warrants a change in status. Specifically, the population of Adak decreased by 94% from 1990 to 2000, bringing it well below the presumptive rural population threshold of 2,500. It is an extremely remote island community accessible only by boat or plane.

- The **Kodiak Area**, including the City of Kodiak, the Mill Bay area, the Coast Guard Station, Women's Bay and Bells Flats, would be grouped and change in status from rural to nonrural. The population of this area is approximately 12,000, well above the nonrural population threshold, and community characteristics indicate nonrural status. (Places excluded from this nonrural grouping are Chiniak, Pasagshak, Anton Larsen, Kalsin Bay and Middle Bay, as well as villages and communities on the Kodiak Archipelago not connected by road to the Kodiak area. These places would remain rural in status.)
- In the Southeast Alaska Region, changes are proposed in the nonrural **Ketchikan Area**, which would be expanded to include areas on the road system to the north and south of the current nonrural boundary. However, Saxman would remain separate and rural. Even though the grouping criteria would indicate including Saxman with the Ketchikan Area, there are social and economic characteristics that indicate that Saxman should not be grouped in the Ketchikan Area, as described further in the proposed rule. The population of the Ketchikan Area, excluding Saxman, is 12,720, well above the nonrural population threshold, and community characteristics indicate nonrural status.
- The analysis used by the Board in developing the proposed rule can be found on the Office of Subsistence Management website, or can be obtained from OSM staff.
- Once again, this is an action item for all of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. Including the rationale for your recommendation would be most helpful to the Board. The Board will make a decision on a final rule at a public meeting in Anchorage December 12-13, 2006.

corrected to read “*G. Request for Comments*”.

Guy Traynor,

*Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch,
Legal Processing Division, Associate Chief
Counsel (Procedure and Administration).*

[FR Doc. E6–13118 Filed 8–11–06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

26 CFR Part 1

[REG–135866–02]

RIN 1545–BA93

Section 1248 Attribution Principles; Correction

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS),
Treasury.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking;
correction.

SUMMARY: This document corrects a notice of proposed rulemaking (REG–135866–02) that was published in the **Federal Register** on Friday, June 2, 2006 (71 FR 31985) providing guidance for determining the earnings and profits attributable to stock of controlled foreign corporations (or former controlled foreign corporations) that are (were) involved in certain nonrecognition transactions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Gilman, (202) 622–3850 (not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The notice of proposed rulemaking (REG–135866–02) that is the subject of this correction is under section 1248 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Need for Correction

As published, REG–135866–02 contains errors that may prove to be misleading and are in need of clarification.

List of Subjects in 26 CFR Part 1

Income taxes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Correction of Publication

Accordingly, the notice of proposed rulemaking (REG–135866–02) that was the subject of FR Doc. E6–8551 is corrected as follows:

PART 1—INCOME TAXES

Paragraph 1. The authority citation for part 1 continues to read in part as follows:

Authority: 26 U.S.C. 7805 * * *

Par. 2. On page 31991, instructional Par. 4. is amended by adding a new entry at the end of the amendatory instruction to read as follows:

Adding new paragraph (g).

§ 1.1248–1 [Corrected]

Par. 3. On page 31991, § 1.1248–1 is amended by adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

§ 1.1248–1 Treatment of gain from certain sales or exchanges of stock in certain foreign corporations.

* * * * *

(g) *Effective date.* Paragraph (a)(4) and paragraph (a)(5), *Example 4*, of this section apply to income inclusions that occur on or after the date that paragraph and example are published as final regulations in the **Federal Register**.

Guy Traynor,

*Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch,
Legal Processing Division, Associate Chief
Counsel (Procedure and Administration).*

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

36 CFR Part 242

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 100

RIN 1018–AT99

Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska, Subpart C; Nonrural Determinations

AGENCIES: Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This rule would revise the list of nonrural areas identified by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board, we, us). Areas determined to be nonrural are not eligible to participate in the Federal Subsistence Management Program on Federal public lands in Alaska. We propose to change Adak’s status to rural. We also propose to add Prudhoe Bay and the Kodiak Area, including the City of Kodiak, the Mill Bay area, Womens Bay, Bell’s Flats, and the Coast Guard Station to the list of nonrural areas. The following areas would continue to be nonrural, but we propose changes in their boundaries: the Kenai Area; the Wasilla/Palmer Area, including Point

McKenzie; the Homer Area, including Fritz Creek East (except Voznesenka) and the North Fork Road area; and the Ketchikan Area. We propose no other changes in status. However, new information could lead to changes not proposed at this time.

DATES: We must receive your written public comments no later than October 27, 2006.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments electronically to Subsistence@fws.gov. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for file format and other information about electronic filing. You may also submit written comments to the Office of Subsistence Management, 3601 C Street, Suite 1030, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attention: Pete Probasco, Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786–3888. For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Steve Kessler, Regional Subsistence Program Leader, USDA, Forest Service, Alaska Region, (907) 786–3888.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments

Electronic filing of comments is preferred: You may submit electronic comments and other data to Subsistence@fws.gov. Please submit as MS Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) files, avoiding the use of any special characters and any form of encryption.

Background

In Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126), Congress found that “the situation in Alaska is unique in that, in most cases, no practical alternative means are available to replace the food supplies and other items gathered from fish and wildlife which supply rural residents dependent on subsistence uses * * *” and that “continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses of resources on public and other lands in Alaska is threatened * * *.” As a result, Title VIII requires, among other things, that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) implement a program to provide rural Alaska residents a priority for the taking of fish and wildlife on public lands in Alaska for subsistence uses, unless the State of Alaska enacts and implements laws of general applicability that are consistent with ANILCA and that provide for the subsistence definition, priority, and participation specified in sections 803, 804, and 805 of ANILCA.

The State implemented a program that the Department of the Interior previously found to be consistent with ANILCA. However, in December 1989, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled in *McDowell v. State of Alaska* that the rural priority in the State subsistence statute violated the Alaska Constitution. The Court's ruling in *McDowell* caused the State to delete the rural priority from the subsistence statute which therefore negated State compliance with ANILCA. The Court stayed the effect of the decision until July 1, 1990. As a result of the *McDowell* decision, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture (Departments) assumed, on July 1, 1990, responsibility for implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA on public lands. On June 29, 1990, the Departments published the Temporary Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska in the **Federal Register** (55 FR 27114). Permanent regulations were jointly published on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22940), and have been amended since then.

As a result of this joint process between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations can be found in the titles for Agriculture and Interior in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) both in title 36, "Parks, Forests, and Public Property," and title 50, "Wildlife and Fisheries," at 36 CFR 242.1–28 and 50 CFR 100.1–28, respectively. The regulations contain the following subparts: Subpart A, General Provisions; Subpart B, Program Structure; Subpart C, Board Determinations; and Subpart D, Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife.

Consistent with Subparts A, B, and C of these regulations, as revised May 7, 2002 (67 FR 30559), and December 27, 2005 (70 FR 76400), the Departments established a Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to administer the Federal Subsistence Management Program, as established by the Secretaries. The Board's composition includes a Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture; the Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Alaska Regional Director, U.S. National Park Service; the Alaska State Director, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM); the Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs; and the Alaska Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service. Through the Board, these agencies participate in the development of regulations for Subparts A, B, and C, and the annual Subpart D regulations.

Rural Determination Process

With a **Federal Register** notice on October 5, 1990 (55 FR 40897), the newly established Federal Subsistence Board initiated the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement as a vehicle for widespread public review and participation in the development of the final temporary regulations. The rural determination process was included, and subsequently on November 23, 1990 (55 FR 48877), the Board published another notice in the **Federal Register** explaining the proposed Federal process for making rural determinations, the criteria to be used, and the application of those criteria in preliminary determinations. Public meetings were held in approximately 56 Alaskan communities, specifically to solicit comments on the proposed Federal Subsistence Management Program. On December 17, 1990, the Board adopted final rural and nonrural determinations, which were published on January 3, 1991 (56 FR 236). Final programmatic regulations were published on May 29, 1992, with only slight variations in the rural determination process (57 FR 22940).

Federal subsistence regulations require that the rural/nonrural status of communities or areas be reviewed every 10 years, beginning with the availability of the 2000 census data. The Board evaluated several options for conducting the review and decided to adopt an approach similar to that taken in 1990, which used criteria established in Federal subsistence regulations. The review was conducted with an emphasis on what has changed since 1990.

Although the process uses data from the 2000 census for its review, some data were not compiled and available until 2005. Data from the Alaska Department of Labor were used to supplement the census data.

During February–July 2005, the staff of the Federal Subsistence Management Program conducted an initial review of the rural status of Alaska communities, looking at the 2000 census data for each community or area with an emphasis on what had changed since 1990. From this initial review, staff compiled a report that included a proposed list of communities and areas for which further analysis appeared warranted. In addition, the report included the method used to develop this list. In August–October 2005, the public and Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils were invited to comment on the results of this initial review.

At a meeting in Anchorage on December 6–7, 2005, the Board took public testimony and determined that

additional information was needed on 10 communities and areas before it decided upon any potential changes.

- For three communities, analysis was focused on evaluation of rural/nonrural status, as follows:

Kodiak, Adak, and Prudhoe Bay: Currently Kodiak and Prudhoe Bay are considered rural, and Adak is considered nonrural. These three communities were further analyzed as to their rural/nonrural status.

- For five nonrural groupings of communities and areas, further analysis evaluated the possibility of excluding or including places, as follows:

Fairbanks North Star Borough: Evaluate whether to continue using the entire borough as the nonrural area, or separate some outlying areas and evaluate their rural/nonrural status independently.

Seward Area: Evaluate whether to exclude Moose Pass and similarly situated places from this nonrural grouping and evaluate their rural/nonrural status independently.

Wasilla/Palmer Area: Evaluate whether to include Willow, Point MacKenzie, and similarly situated places in this nonrural grouping.

Homer Area: Evaluate whether to include Fox River, Happy Valley, and similarly situated places in this nonrural grouping.

Kenai Area: Evaluate whether to exclude Clam Gulch and similarly situated places from this nonrural grouping and evaluate their rural/nonrural status independently.

- In addition, two areas were recommended for further analysis as follows:

Ketchikan Area: Evaluate whether to include Saxman, and areas of growth and development outside the current nonrural boundary, and evaluate the rural/nonrural status of the whole area.

Delta Junction, Big Delta, Deltana and Fort Greely: Evaluate whether some or all of these communities should be grouped, and their rural/nonrural status evaluated collectively.

This list for additional analysis differed from the proposed list put out for public comment in July 2005, in that: (1) The scope of the review was broadened for the Ketchikan area, currently considered nonrural, to include an analysis of rural/nonrural characteristics of the entire area; (2) the rural/nonrural status of Prudhoe Bay was added; and (3) additional analysis of Sitka was not believed to be necessary.

Sitka, whose population had increased from 8,588 people in 1990 to 8,835 in 2000, had been identified as an area possibly warranting further

analysis. However, during its December 6–7, 2005, meeting, the Board heard substantial public testimony regarding the rural characteristics of Sitka and determined that no additional analysis was necessary. The Board is proposing to leave Sitka's rural status unchanged.

During January–May 2006, Federal subsistence staff conducted in-depth analyses of each community or area on the Board-approved list of communities and areas identified for further analysis.

On June 22, 2006, the Board met in executive session to develop the list of communities and areas they believe to be nonrural. Those communities and areas are identified in this proposed rule.

Population size is a fundamental distinguishing characteristic between rural and nonrural communities. Under the current programmatic guidance in Federal subsistence regulations:

- A community with a population of 2,500 or less is deemed rural, unless it possesses significant characteristics of a nonrural nature, or is considered to be socially and economically a part of a nonrural area.
- A community with a population of more than 7,000 is deemed nonrural, unless it possesses significant characteristics of a rural nature.
- A community with a population above 2,500 but not more than 7,000 is evaluated to determine its rural/nonrural status. The community characteristics considered in this evaluation may include, but are not limited to, diversity and development of the local economy, use of fish and wildlife, community infrastructure, transportation, and educational institutions.

Communities that are economically, socially, and communally integrated are combined for evaluation purposes. The Board identified three guidelines or criteria for analysis to assist in its determination of whether or not to group communities in its review of rural determinations. The criteria to be used include: (1) Are the communities in proximity and road-accessible to one another? The first criterion, proximity and road accessibility, is considered a logical first step in evaluating the relationship between communities, and, applied in relation to the other two criteria, is considered a reasonable indicator of economic, social, and communal integration. (2) Do they share a common high school attendance area? The second criterion, regarding sharing a common high school attendance area, is taken to be an indicator of the social integration of communities. This is an improvement by way of modification from the former criterion of a shared

school district. The public pointed out in past testimony that attendance in a common school district often reflects political or administrative boundaries rather than social integration. A shared social experience is better captured by the shared high school criterion. (3) Do 30% or more of the working people commute from one community to another? This criterion, regarding whether working people commute from one community to another, was identified as providing meaningful information relating to the grouping of communities. Also, the U.S. Census uses this criterion because commuting to work is an easily understood measure that reflects social and economic integration. These criteria were not considered separately, but assessed collectively, with the recommendation to group communities being dependent upon the collective assessment.

Community characteristics and specific indicators that the Board used to evaluate rural/nonrural status include: (1) Economy—wage employment, percent unemployment, per capita income, diversity of services, cost-of-food index, and number of stores defined as large national retailers; (2) community infrastructure—including the cost of electricity; (3) fish and wildlife use—variety of species used per household, percentage of households participating, level of average harvest per capita for all subsistence resources combined, and level of average harvest per capita for salmon and large land mammals only; (4) transportation—variety of means, predominant means, and length of road system; and (5) educational institutions present in the community.

The Board's analysis and preliminary efforts to distinguish between rural places and nonrural places were heavily reliant on population size, but when the Board used other characteristics, its approach was based on a totality of the circumstances. Unemployment is generally higher and per capita income is generally lower in rural places than in nonrural places. Cost of food and cost of electricity were generally higher in the rural communities than in the nonrural. Subsistence per capita harvest of all resources shows a pattern of increasing amount with decreasing population size among nonrural areas, and typically higher levels in rural communities. The per capita harvest of salmon and large land mammals also shows a general pattern of increasing amount with decreasing population size among nonrural areas, and typically higher levels in rural communities. There were no large national retailers found in the rural communities

examined (other than Kodiak which is being proposed as nonrural), or in the three smallest nonrural communities or areas. Population density was generally higher for most nonrural places than it was for rural places.

Summarized below are the Board's recommendation for each area analyzed and the justification for that recommendation.

Adak: Recommend changing Adak's status from nonrural to rural. Following the closure of the military base, the community of Adak has decreased in population by 94 percent from 1990 to 2000. It currently has 167 residents (2005), which is well below the presumptive rural threshold of 2,500 persons. Adak is also extremely remote and is accessible only by boat or plane, with the nearest community (Atka) 169 miles away. With the changes that have occurred since the 1990s, Adak now has rural characteristics typical of a small isolated community.

Prudhoe Bay (including Deadhorse): Recommend changing Prudhoe Bay's status from rural to nonrural. In 2000 Prudhoe Bay had one permanent household comprised of five people. There were reportedly no permanent residents in February 2006. Prudhoe Bay has none of the characteristics typical of a rural community. Prudhoe Bay is an industrial enclave built for the sole purpose of extracting oil. The oil companies provide everything employees need: Lodging, food, health care, and recreation. The thousands of people in Prudhoe Bay do not live there permanently, but work multi week-long shifts. They eat in cafeterias and live in group quarters. There are no schools, grocery stores, or churches. Subsistence is not a part of the way of life. Hunting in the area and possession of firearms and ammunition are prohibited. Based on its industrial enclave characteristics, Prudhoe Bay should be determined to be nonrural.

Fairbanks North Star Borough: No changes to this nonrural grouping are recommended. In applying the grouping criteria as indicators of economic, social, and communal integration, the Board believes that the current nonrural boundary of the Fairbanks Area should continue to be defined as the Fairbanks North Star Borough boundary. No census designated places (CDPs) should be excluded from the nonrural grouping for the following reasons: (1) All CDPs are road accessible to one another. Although the Harding-Birch Lakes and Salcha areas are more sparsely populated than central areas of the borough, both communities include many occasional-use homes owned by Fairbanks residents. Further, both

places are home to only a few year-round residents. (2) The majority of the Borough's high school students are bused to one of the schools located in Fairbanks, North Pole, or Eielson. (3) The Remainder area of the North Star Borough should be included in the grouping because the majority of the population is road connected and over half (57 percent) of the workers residing in this area commute to Fairbanks for employment. Additionally, 75 percent of the workers living in Harding-Birch Lakes drive to the City of Fairbanks to work, and 71 percent of the working population in Pleasant Valley commute to the City of Fairbanks.

Delta Junction Vicinity: No changes are recommended for the rural status of Delta Junction, or the communities in the immediate vicinity. In applying the grouping criteria as indicators of economic, social, and communal integration, the Board believes that the four Delta Junction vicinity CDPs assigned for analysis (Delta Junction, Big Delta, Deltana, and Fort Greely) should be grouped as an area for purposes of rural/nonrural analysis because they fulfill the three guidelines for grouping: (1) All four CDPs are road connected and proximal; (2) the majority of the high school-aged students from Big Delta, Deltana, and Fort Greely attend high school in Delta Junction; and (3) in the two outlying CDPs, over 30 percent of the workers commute within the vicinity (41 percent of the workers living in Big Delta commute to either Delta Junction, Deltana, Fort Greely, or to a Remainder area within the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area, and 45 percent of the workers in Deltana commute to Delta Junction or Fort Greely).

The four places grouped into the Delta Junction Area should remain rural in status. The population size of the grouping (3,921) places it in the nonpresumptive midrange, and information on the characteristics of the grouping, although somewhat limited, is indicative of a rural character. The recent economic upswing to the area due to construction of the Missile Defense system at Fort Greely and development of the Pogo Mine is thought to be temporary.

Seward Area: No changes to this nonrural grouping are recommended. In applying the grouping criteria as indicators of economic, social, and communal integration, the Board believes that the Moose Pass, Crown Point, and Primrose CDPs should remain within the Seward Area grouping. Moose Pass, Crown Point, and Primrose CDPs meet all the criteria for grouping: proximity and road-

accessibility to the Seward Area; their students attend the high school in Seward; and the level of workers commuting to Seward for employment is greater than 30 percent.

Wasilla/Palmer Area: Include the Point MacKenzie CDP in the nonrural Wasilla/Palmer Area grouping; do not include the Willow CDP. The Board believes that the Point MacKenzie CDP meets all the criteria for grouping with the Wasilla/Palmer Area. The Point MacKenzie CDP is in proximity to the Wasilla/Palmer Area and road-accessible; their students attend Wasilla High School; and the level of workers commuting to the Wasilla/Palmer Area for employment is at 50 percent. This change would make Point MacKenzie part of a nonrural area, a change from its current rural status. The Board recommends that the Willow CDP not be included in the Wasilla/Palmer Area grouping. Students in the Willow CDP are located in two attendance areas for high schools, within and outside of the Wasilla/Palmer Area. The level of commuting for workers to the Wasilla/Palmer Area is at 23.9 percent, which is below the criteria identified for grouping.

Kenai Area: Adjust the boundaries of the nonrural Kenai Area to include all of the current Sterling CDP, and propose no change to the current grouping and status of Clam Gulch CDP as part of the nonrural Kenai Area. It appears that Clam Gulch CDP should continue to be included in the Kenai Area grouping because, although students of Clam Gulch CDP attend high school outside of the Kenai Area, the commuting of workers to the Kenai Area is on the order of 30 percent, and Clam Gulch is connected by paved highway to the Kenai Area, with which it has been grouped since initial determinations were made in 1990. It also appears that Coho CDP should remain within the Kenai Area grouping. Coho students attend a high school in the Kenai Area and the level of work commuting, at 69.5 percent, is significantly above the minimum criteria for grouping. The Sterling CDP has been part of the nonrural Kenai Area since 1990. For the 2000 census, the Sterling CDP has expanded in size, such that a significant portion of the CDP extends beyond the current boundary of the nonrural Kenai Area. The Board believes that the boundaries of the Kenai Area should be adjusted to include all of the current Sterling CDP. Students within the Sterling CDP go to high school within the Kenai Area and the level of commuting is at 61.2 percent of workers, well above the minimum criteria for grouping.

Homer Area: Adjust the boundaries of the nonrural Homer Area to include all of the Fritz Creek CDP (not including Voznesenka), and the North Fork Road portion of the Anchor Point CDP. This change would make Fritz Creek East, except for Voznesenka, and the North Fork Road portion of the Anchor Point CDP nonrural, a change from their current rural status. The Board has tentatively concluded for Fritz Creek East that, except for Voznesenka, the residents are economically, socially, and communally integrated with the Homer Area. Fritz Creek East is in proximity and road-connected to the Homer Area. The Homer High School attendance area includes their students, and 43.8 percent of their workers commute to the Homer Area. It appears that Voznesenka should not be included in the Homer Area because, while it is in proximity and road-connected to the Homer Area, the number of jobs shown as being located within the Homer Area is only 19.5 percent, and Voznesenka students attend high school in Voznesenka.

The Board believes that residents of the North Fork Road area fully meet two of the three criteria, proximity and commuting of workers. For the third criteria, although students have the option of attendance in Nikolaevsk School or Ninilchik High School, the vast majority go to Homer High School. This is sufficient basis for considering the North Fork Road area of the Anchor Point CDP to be economically, socially, and communally integrated with the nonrural Homer Area.

The Board believes that residents of the Happy Valley CDP fulfill only the proximity criterion for grouping with the Homer Area. Happy Valley students are within the Ninilchik School high school attendance area, and less than 30 percent of Happy Valley workers commute to the Homer Area (14.4 percent). It appears that residents of the Happy Valley CDP should not be included with the Homer Area.

It appears that the Nikolaevsk CDP, north of the Anchor Point CDP and connected to the Homer Area by the North Fork Road, does not warrant inclusion in the Homer Area. There is a K-12 school in Nikolaevsk, and data show that only 22 percent of jobs held by Nikolaevsk residents were located in the Homer Area.

It appears that residents of Fox River CDP, primarily in the communities of Razdolna and Kachemak Selo, do not meet any of the three criteria, which would indicate that Fox River residents are not economically, socially, or communally integrated with the Homer Area.

Kodiak Area: Define the Kodiak Area to include the road system, including the City of Kodiak, the Mill Bay area, Womens Bay, Bell's Flats, and the Coast Guard Station, but not including Chiniak, Pasagshak, and Anton Larsen, and change the status of the Kodiak Area, as defined, from rural to nonrural. The Board believes that the Kodiak Station CDP should be included in the Kodiak Area grouping. The Kodiak Station CDP directly fulfills two of the three criteria for being grouped in the Kodiak Area, and special consideration is warranted in relation to the third criterion: (1) The Kodiak Station CDP is road-connected and adjacent to the City of Kodiak; (2) the Kodiak Station CDP does not have a high school; all students attend high school in the City of Kodiak; and (3) the special circumstance of enlisted employment accounts for the overall commuting level of workers to Kodiak City being an estimated 11 percent of all working residents. However, this can be attributed to the fact that enlisted personnel residing on the base are by duty assignment bound to the base. Working dependents, who are not bound to employment on the base, virtually all work in Kodiak City. While the worker commuting criterion is thereby not met if one pools enlisted personnel and working dependents, ties to the Kodiak Area are otherwise evident. The Board believes that the Womens Bay CDP should be included in the Kodiak Area grouping. Womens Bay CDP fulfills all three criteria for being grouped in the Kodiak Area: (1) Womens Bay CDP is road-connected and proximal to the City of Kodiak; (2) Womens Bay CDP does not have a high school; students attend high school in the City of Kodiak; and (3) more than 30 percent of the working residents are employed in the City of Kodiak.

The Board believes that the Chiniak CDP should not be included in the Kodiak Area grouping because (1) although there is a road from Chiniak to the City of Kodiak, it is a minimum of a one-hour trip, and the 14 miles closest to Chiniak are unpaved; (2) there is a partial high school in Chiniak to grade 10, and only two-fifths of the high school-aged children attend school in Kodiak.

The Board believes that the road-connected Remainder area should be included in the Kodiak Area grouping, with the exception of the Pasagshak and Anton Larsen portions. The road-connected Remainder area, with the exceptions as noted, is proximal to the City of Kodiak; students from the road-connected Remainder area attend high school in the City of Kodiak; and more than 30 percent of the working residents

of the Remainder area are employed in the City of Kodiak. The road-connected Remainder area of the Kodiak Area includes people residing in Anton Larsen and Pasagshak. There is no information about these "sub-areas" of the road-connected Remainder area, thus it is unknown if students living in these areas are taught through correspondence, home-schooled, or travel to Kodiak to attend high school. It is also unknown how many people commute to Kodiak City to work. However, the Board determined that despite the lack of information regarding the three criteria for grouping, the remoteness of Pasagshak and Anton Larsen is comparable to the remoteness of Chiniak, and therefore elected to propose no change in the rural status of these areas.

The population of the Kodiak Area—estimated at approximately 12,000 in 2005—is well above the presumptive nonrural population of 7,000 in Federal regulations. The population has increased slightly since 1990. Kodiak's per capita income is relatively high and it also has a 2-year college, high diversity of services, a large national retailer, fast food restaurants, and roads linking the outlying area to the city. Of the communities examined during this analysis, the Kodiak Area is 34 percent larger in population than the next largest rural place, and its use of fish and wildlife is 24 percent lower. While the per capita harvest of subsistence resources is higher in the Kodiak Area than in some rural areas, it is well below the levels in some other rural communities.

Ketchikan Area: Define the Ketchikan Area to include Pennock Island, parts of Gravina Island, and the road system connected to the City of Ketchikan, except for the community of Saxman. Saxman would retain its current rural status, and the Ketchikan Area, as defined, would retain its nonrural status. Saxman is directly adjacent to Ketchikan, connected by road, and surrounded by the outlying Ketchikan development. Visually, the only distinguishing feature to indicate the boundary between Ketchikan and Saxman is a sign on the South Tongass Highway. Saxman has clearly been overtaken and is surrounded by the geographic expansion of Ketchikan; Saxman students attend high school in Ketchikan; and 64 percent of the workers in Saxman commute to Ketchikan for their employment, with another 8 percent commuting to the Remainder area of the borough to work. Even though the grouping criteria would indicate including Saxman with the Ketchikan Area, social and economic

characteristics indicate that Saxman should not be grouped in the Ketchikan Area. Saxman is a small, close-knit community that is socially and politically separate from Ketchikan. The residents of Saxman have two distinct entities to separate themselves from Ketchikan, the traditional government (Organized Village of Saxman) and the municipal government (City of Saxman). Socioeconomic indicators suggest distinctions between the two communities. For example, Saxman has a higher unemployment rate, lower per capita income, higher percentage of residents below the poverty level than those found in Ketchikan, and a 70 percent Native population. Another distinguishing characteristic of the community is that Saxman residents depend much more heavily on the harvest of subsistence resources. Saxman's average per capita harvest of 217 pounds is substantially more than has been estimated for the Ketchikan Area. Thus, while the grouping criteria lead to including Saxman with the Ketchikan Area, the unique socioeconomic characteristics of Saxman suggest that it should remain separate from the Ketchikan Area.

The Remainder fulfills all three criteria for grouping with the Ketchikan Area: (1) The Remainder, other than nearby Gravina and Pennock Islands, is road-connected to the City of Ketchikan; (2) Students in the Remainder attend high school in Ketchikan; and (3) Over 30 percent of the workers from the Remainder commute to work in the City of Ketchikan. Presently, most of the Remainder is included in the nonrural Ketchikan Area, established in 1990, except for extensions of the highway to the north and south that have since occurred.

The population of the Ketchikan Area was estimated at 12,720 in 2005 (excluding Saxman), having decreased slightly from 1990. Ketchikan possesses many nonrural characteristics, including having a 2-year college, a large national retailer, car dealerships, fast food restaurants, and roads linking the outlying surrounding area to the city. Although the pulp mill closed, there is still some diversity in the economy with tourism, fishing, fish processing, timber, retail services, and government providing the majority of employment. There is a hospital and a high diversity of services offered. The Ketchikan Area had the sixth highest population in the state in 2005, considering community groupings as defined by the Board. All other areas with higher populations are currently considered nonrural in Federal subsistence regulations. Three areas

with smaller populations are currently classified as nonrural and are not proposed for a change in status: the Homer Area, Seward Area, and Valdez. Harvest of subsistence resources in the Ketchikan Area is lower than is characteristic of rural communities.

This change would make the extended road connected areas of Ketchikan nonrural, a change from their current rural status.

The list of nonrural communities and areas, along with those other nonrural communities or areas whose status would remain unchanged, is published herein as the proposed rule. All other communities and areas of Alaska not listed herein would retain their rural determination. We propose to amend Section _____.23, which identifies those communities and areas of Alaska that are determined to be rural and nonrural. We have made maps available for the nonrural areas. The purpose of these maps is to provide to the subsistence user an overall graphic representation of the extent of the nonrural areas. To view maps, go to the Office of Subsistence Management Web site at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/home.html>. If you do not have access to the internet, you may contact the Office of Subsistence Management at the address or phone number shown at **ADDRESSES** or **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, respectively, and we will send the maps to you.

During August–October 2006, the public and Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils are invited to comment on the proposed rule. Hearings in Kodiak, Sitka, Saxman, and Ketchikan will be held in September and October 2006. The specific dates,

times, and locations will be announced in locally and Statewide—circulated newspapers or you may call the phone number shown at **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Additional hearings may be scheduled by the Board, as appropriate. In December 12–13, 2006, in Anchorage, Alaska, the Federal Subsistence Board will meet to consider the comments received and may make changes to the proposed rule. From the decisions made in December, the Board will develop a final rule for publication in the **Federal Register**. The effective date of any community or area changing from a rural to nonrural status is 5 years after the date of publication of the final rule in the **Federal Register**. For communities or areas that change from nonrural to rural, the effective date is 30 days after the date of publication of the final rule in the **Federal Register**.

Because the Federal Subsistence Management Program relates to public lands managed by an agency or agencies in both the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, we propose to incorporate identical text into 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100.

Conformance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. That document described the major issues associated with Federal subsistence management as identified through public meetings, written comments, and

staff analysis, and examined the environmental consequences of four alternatives. Proposed regulations (Subparts A, B, and C) that would implement the preferred alternative were included in the DEIS as an appendix. The DEIS and the proposed administrative regulations presented a framework for an annual regulatory cycle regarding subsistence hunting and fishing regulations (Subpart D). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992.

Based on the public comments received, the analysis contained in the FEIS, and the recommendations of the Federal Subsistence Board and the Department of the Interior's Subsistence Policy Group, the Secretary of the Interior, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture—Forest Service, implemented Alternative IV as identified in the DEIS and FEIS (Record of Decision on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska (ROD), signed April 6, 1992). The DEIS and the selected alternative in the FEIS defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence hunting and fishing regulations. The final rule for Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska, Subparts A, B, and C, published May 29, 1992, implemented the Federal Subsistence Management Program and included a framework for an annual cycle for subsistence hunting and fishing regulations. The following **Federal Register** documents pertain to this rulemaking:

FEDERAL REGISTER DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA, SUBPARTS A AND B

Federal Register citation	Date of publication	Category	Detail
57 FR 22940	May 29, 1992	Final Rule	"Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska; Final Rule" was published in the Federal Register establishing a Federal Subsistence Management Program.
64 FR 1276	January 8, 1999	Final Rule (amended) ..	Amended 7 FR 22940 to include subsistence activities occurring on inland navigable waters in which the United States has a reserved water right and to identify specific Federal land units where reserved water rights exist. Extended the Federal Subsistence Board's management to all Federal lands selected under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the Alaska Statehood Act and situated within the boundaries of a Conservation System Unit, National Recreation Area, National Conservation Area, or any new national forest or forest addition, until conveyed to the State of Alaska or an Alaska Native Corporation. Specified and clarified Secretaries' authority to determine when hunting, fishing, or trapping activities taking place in Alaska off the public lands interfere with the subsistence priority.
66 FR 31533	June 12, 2001	Interim Rule	Expanded the authority that the Board may delegate to agency field officials and clarified the procedures for enacting emergency or temporary restrictions, closures, or openings.

FEDERAL REGISTER DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA, SUBPARTS A AND B—Continued

Federal Register citation	Date of publication	Category	Detail
67 FR 30559	May 7, 2002	Final Rule	In response to comments on an interim rule, amended the operating regulations. Also corrected some inadvertent errors and oversights of previous rules.
68 FR 7703	February 18, 2003	Direct Final Rule	Clarified how old a person must be to receive certain subsistence use permits and removed the requirement that Regional Councils must have an odd number of members.
68 FR 23035	April 30, 2003	Affirmation of Direct Final Rule.	Received no adverse comments on 68 FR 7703. Adopted direct final rule.
68 FR 60957	October 14, 2004	Final Rule	Established Regional Council membership goals.
70 FR 76400	December 27, 2005	Final Rule	Revised jurisdiction in marine waters and clarified jurisdiction relative to military lands.

An environmental assessment was prepared in 1997 on the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries and is available from the office listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.** The Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture determined that the expansion of Federal jurisdiction did not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and therefore signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Compliance With Section 810 of ANILCA

The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. A section 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process. The final section 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD, which concluded that the Federal Subsistence Management Program may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but that the program is not likely to significantly restrict subsistence uses.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule contains no new information collection requirements subject to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The information collection requirements described in the CFR regulations were approved by OMB under 44 U.S.C. 3501 and were assigned clearance number 1018–0075, which expires August 31, 2006. We will not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information request unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Other Requirements

Economic Effects—This rule is not a significant rule subject to OMB review under Executive Order 12866. This rulemaking will impose no significant costs on small entities; this rule does not restrict any existing sport or commercial fishery on the public lands, and subsistence fisheries will continue at essentially the same levels as they presently occur. The number of businesses and the amount of trade that will result from this Federal land-related activity is unknown but expected to be insignificant.

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires preparation of regulatory flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. The Departments have determined that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

This rulemaking will impose no significant costs on small entities; the exact number of businesses and the amount of trade that will result from this Federal land-related activity is unknown. The aggregate effect is an insignificant positive economic effect on a number of small entities, such as tackle, boat, sporting goods dealers, and gasoline dealers. The number of small entities affected is unknown; however, the fact that the positive effects will be seasonal in nature and will, in most cases, merely continue preexisting uses of public lands indicates that the effects will not be significant.

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence preference on public lands. The scope of this program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these

regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies, and no cost is involved to any State or local entities or Tribal governments.

The Secretaries have determined that these regulations meet the applicable standards provided in Sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988 on Civil Justice Reform.

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless the State program is compliant with the requirements of that Title.

In accordance with the President's memorandum of April 29, 1994, "Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments" (59 FR 22951), 512 DM 2, and E.O. 13175, we have evaluated possible effects on Federally recognized Indian tribes and have determined that there are no substantial direct effects. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is a participating agency in this rulemaking.

On May 18, 2001, the President issued Executive Order 13211 on regulations that significantly affect energy supply, distribution, or use. This Executive Order requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. As this rule is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, this

action is not a significant action and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

William Knauer drafted these regulations under the guidance of Peter J. Probasco of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Chuck Ardizzone, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management; Greg Bos, Carl Jack, and Jerry Berg, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Sandy Rabinowitch and Nancy Swanton, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service; Dr. Warren Eastland, Pat Petrivelli, and Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs; and Steve Kessler, Alaska Regional Office, USDA—Forest Service provided additional guidance.

List of Subjects

36 CFR Part 242

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

List of Subjects

50 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Secretaries propose to amend title 36, part 242, and title 50, part 100, of the Code of Federal Regulations, as set forth below.

PART —SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA

1. The authority citation for both 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 would continue to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3, 472, 551, 668dd, 3101–3126; 18 U.S.C. 3551–3586; 43 U.S.C. 1733.

Subpart C—Board Determinations

2. In Subpart C of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, § _____.23(a) would be revised to read as follows:

* * * * *

§ _____.23 Rural Determinations.

(a) The Board has determined all communities and areas to be rural in accordance with § _____.15 except the following:

- (1) Fairbanks North Star Borough;
- (2) Homer area—including Homer, Anchor Point, North Fork Road area, Kachemak City, and the Fritz Creek area (not including Voznesenka);

(3) Juneau area—including Juneau, West Juneau, and Douglas;

(4) Kenai area—including Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatoof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch;

(5) Ketchikan area—including all parts of the road system connected to the City of Ketchikan (except Saxman), Pennock Island, and parts of Gravina Island;

(6) Kodiak area—including the City of Kodiak, the Mill Bay area, the Coast Guard Station, Womens Bay, and Bells Flats;

(7) Municipality of Anchorage;

(8) Prudhoe Bay;

(9) Seward area—including Seward and Moose Pass;

(10) Valdez; and

(11) Wasilla/Palmer area—including Wasilla, Palmer, Sutton, Big Lake, Houston, Point MacKenzie, and Bodenbergt Butte.

You may obtain maps delineating the boundaries of nonrural areas from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management.

* * * * *

Dated: July 24, 2006.

Peter J. Probasco,

Acting Chair, Federal Subsistence Board.

Dated: July 24, 2006.

Steve Kessler,

Subsistence Program Leader, USDA—Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 06–6902 Filed 8–11–06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–P; 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

36 CFR Part 242

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 100

RIN 1018–AU15

Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska, Subpart C and Subpart D—2007–2008 Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations; 2007–2008 Subsistence Taking of Fish on the Kenai Peninsula Regulations

AGENCIES: Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This proposed rule would establish regulations for hunting and trapping seasons, harvest limits, methods, and means related to taking of

wildlife for subsistence uses during the 2007–2008 regulatory year. The rulemaking is necessary because Subpart D is subject to an annual public review cycle. When final, this rulemaking would replace the wildlife taking regulations included in the “Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska, Subpart D—2006–2007 Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife Regulations,” which expire on June 30, 2007. This rule would also amend the Customary and Traditional Use Determinations of the Federal Subsistence Board and the General Regulations on taking of wildlife. In addition, at the request of the Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Federal Subsistence Board is accepting proposals to revise the regulations for fishing seasons, harvest limits, and methods related to taking of fish on the Kenai Peninsula for subsistence uses during the 2007–2008 regulatory year.

DATES: The Federal Subsistence Board must receive your written public comments and proposals to change this proposed rule no later than October 20, 2006. Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Regional Councils) will hold public meetings to receive proposals to change this proposed rule on several dates from September 7, 2006, through October 20, 2006. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for additional information on the public meetings, including dates.

ADDRESSES: You may submit proposals electronically to Subsistence@fws.gov. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for file formats and other information about electronic filing. You may also submit written comments and proposals to the Office of Subsistence Management, 3601 C Street, Suite 1030, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. The public meetings will be held at various locations in Alaska. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for additional information on locations of the public meetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pete Probasco, Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786–3888. For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Steve Kessler, (907) 786–3592.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Review Process—Regulation Comments, Proposals, and Public Meetings

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board), through the Regional Councils, will hold meetings on this proposed rule at the following Alaska locations, on the following dates:

COUNCIL COMPOSITION UPDATE

In December 1998, Safari Club International (SCI) and others filed a lawsuit against the Secretaries of the Interior and of Agriculture and the Federal Subsistence Board. The original complaint challenged specific subsistence priority determinations and the process for making those determinations. In 2000, SCI amended its complaint to challenge the composition of subsistence regional advisory council (Council) membership. In 2003, the Council charters were changed to stipulate that members would represent either subsistence or commercial/sport users and to set a goal of 30% representation of commercial and sport users on each Council.

In August 2006, the Court concluded that the Board had not provided a sufficient administrative record showing rationale for the 70:30 Council composition plan. The Court ordered the Board to stop using the 70:30 system after the 2006 Council member appointment process and to promptly begin developing a plan for balanced membership that will meet ANILCA and FACA requirements. The Court stated that while 70:30 is one way of meeting FACA requirements, the Board should consider other ways of achieving balanced membership on the councils. Therefore, to address the Court's concerns and to be as inclusive as possible in developing the membership plan, the Office of Subsistence Management is proceeding as follows.

- As soon as possible, publish a 30-day notice in the Federal Register which will explain the current situation and the rationale for the 70:30 rule. The notice will request public comments regarding the 70:30 rule and solicit alternative plans for balanced Council membership.
- The content of the Federal Register Notice will be presented to the Councils at the winter 2007 meetings. At that time the Councils may hear public testimony and provide comments and suggestions.
- The Board will receive the Councils' and public comments, including pertinent testimony given at Council meetings, at the May 2007 Board meeting. The Board will review all suggested alternatives and modifications and develop a recommendation to the Secretaries.

If necessary, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture will then begin the rule-making process.

DRAFT CLOSURE, SUA, AND C&T POLICIES UPDATE

August 29, 2006

DRAFT CLOSURE POLICY

This draft policy describes how the Federal Subsistence Board will handle closures to hunting, trapping and fishing on Federal public lands in Alaska. All of the Regional Advisory Councils reviewed a draft of this policy at their winter 2006 Council meetings. Revisions were made to the draft policy based on comments from the Councils, the State of Alaska, and the Solicitor's office. At their August 25, 2006 meeting, the Board took more public comments and asked that a subcommittee of the Board work on this issue. Staff is continuing to review wildlife closures. Three of the ten Councils will be reviewing closures in their regions during the fall 2006 Council meeting cycle.

DRAFT SUBSISTENCE USE AMOUNTS (SUA) PROTOCOL

This draft protocol was intended to provide guidance to State and Federal managers for coordinating subsistence management. A draft of the protocol was provided to the Councils for their review at the winter 2006 meetings. Many of the Councils raised serious concerns about some of the State's Amounts Necessary for Subsistence (ANS) numbers and the implications of using these numbers for management. No further work has been done on the draft protocol since the winter 2006 Council meetings, and a plan has yet to be developed for how to better approach the issue.

DRAFT CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE (C&T) POLICY

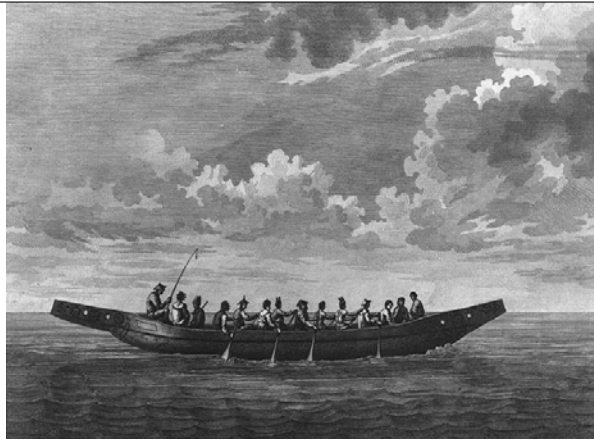
The purpose of the draft policy is to develop a clear written explanation of the Board's C&T use determination process. In recent years, ADF&G has expressed concerns that some of the Board C&T findings could create a larger pool of users, which could restrict nonsubsistence users. Staff is examining various options in developing this policy. The goal is to have a draft ready for review by the Councils during the winter 2007 meetings. A lawsuit has recently been filed by the State of Alaska concerning a Unit 12 Federal Subsistence Board C&T determination for Chistochina and Menatasta; this may complicate ongoing discussions with the State on the C&T Policy. Staff is putting together the administrative record on this C&T decision to file it with the 9th Circuit Court in early September.

Secretarial Petition: Hunting Licenses

The Federal Subsistence Board approved distributing the following petition from the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to each of the nine Regional Advisory Councils for review and recommendations. This petition is included with Fall 2006 meeting materials.

The petition requests the Secretaries to issue a Federal hunting license to Federally qualified subsistence users hunting on Federal public lands, instead of the current requirement in Federal subsistence management regulations that Federally qualified subsistence users must have a State-issued hunting license when hunting on Federal public lands.

Any Council comments and recommendations should be forwarded to the Southeast Council. These will be included with the petition when the Southeast Council submits it to the Secretaries. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior have authority to change license requirements.



***Southeast Alaska Regional
Advisory Council***

**Dolly Garza, Ph. D.,
Vice-Chair**

**University of Alaska
Marine Advisory Program
2417 N. Tongass 213A
Ketchikan, AK 99901
907-247-4978
*ffdag@uaf.edu***

March 30, 2006

Mitch Dementieff, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Mr. Dementieff,

The Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council (SERAC) met in Saxman, February 27 through March 3, 2006. At this meeting the Council reviewed the attached petition to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture concerning the present requirement that subsistence hunters possess a State of Alaska hunting license in order to hunt under Federal subsistence regulations. Because this is a statewide issue, other Regional Advisory Councils need the opportunity to review the draft SERAC petition and to provide their comments and suggestions. The Council proposes the following course of action to solicit input from other Regional Advisory Councils, revise, complete, and submit this petition for consideration by the Secretaries:

1. The draft SERAC petition will be provided to all Councils for their review and recommendation at fall 2006 Council meetings.
2. Councils will provide their comments and recommendations back to SERAC within one month of fall meetings.
3. SERAC will hold a teleconference meeting to finalize the petition on approximately Nov. 25, 2006. The comments and recommendations of other Councils will be appended to the final petition. The final petition will be submitted end of November, 2006.

Please address any questions with this letter either directly to me or through Dr. Robert Schroeder, Subsistence Management Coordinator, U. S. Forest Service, Alaska Region, Box 21628, Juneau, AK 99802-1628, 1(800) 586-7895, fax (907) 586-7860, rschroeder@fs.fed.us.

Thank you for considering the recommendations of the Southeast Regional Advisory Council.

Yours truly,

s/s DOLLY GARZA

Dolly Garza, Vice-Chair

cc. Council Members:

Bert Adams Jr., Yakutat

Donald Hernandez, Pt. Baker/Petersburg

Floyd Kookesh, Angoon

Patricia Phillips, Pelican

Michael Bangs, Petersburg

Harvey Kitka, Sitka

Dick Stokes, Wrangell

Mike Douville, Craig

Nick James, Kake

Michael Soufoulis, Juneau

Frank Wright Jr., Hoonah

DRAFT PETITION TO THE SECRETARIES CONCERNING HUNTING LICENSES

Secretary of the Interior

Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture

Dear Secretaries,

For a number of years, the Council has been concerned with the requirement that Federally-qualified subsistence hunters, using Federal lands to meet their subsistence needs, have been required to purchase and carry State of Alaska hunting licenses. The Council believes that this requirement is unnecessary, puts an undo financial and regulatory burden on Federally-qualified subsistence users, and conflicts with the intention of ANILCA to provide protection in Federal law for subsistence uses.

The Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Council (SERAC) met in Saxman, February 27 through March 3, 2006. The Council represents all southeast subsistence communities including Yakutat. The Council is authorized by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), and chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, to provide recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board concerning regulatory and land management actions that may affect subsistence uses of fish and wildlife. ANILCA and the charter also recognize the Council's authority to "initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region" and to "provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations....(on) any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region."

The Council approved this Petition to the Secretaries at it Saxman meeting by unanimous vote on SERAC resolution 06-04. This petition requests deletion of the current requirement that Federally-qualified subsistence purchase and carry State of Alaska hunting licenses while hunting under Federal subsistence management regulations on Federal public land. The Council requests that this petition be provided to other Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils at their Fall 2006 meetings for review, revision, and concurrence.

Council authority

The Council has addressed the license issue in its recent Annual Reports to the Secretaries. Councils are authorized to submit Annual Reports under ANILCA Sec. 805 (a) (3) (D). Among other things, the Councils Annual Reports shall contain:

(iii) a recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs; and

(iv) recommendations concerning policies, standard guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy...

The Council considers this statutory direction to be central to its ability to represent subsistence interests in Southeast Alaska and insure that ANILCA protections for subsistence are in place. The Council believes that the license requirement is an issue of 'taking.' Under current Federal regulations, a Federally-qualified subsistence hunter may only take game if he or she is in possession of a State of Alaska hunting license. Because this is an issue of 'taking,' the Council believes that its recommendation concerning this provision is due deference under ANILCA Sec. 805 (c):

The Secretary, in performing his monitoring responsibility pursuant to section 806 and in the exercise of his closure and other administrative authority over the public lands, shall consider the report and recommendations of the regional advisory councils concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within their respective regional for subsistence uses. The Secretary may choose not to follow any recommendations which he determines is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. If a recommendation is not adopted by the Secretary, he shall set forth the factual basis and the reasons for his decision.

Background on the current license requirement

Current regulations. Information provided to the public in *Management Regulations for the Harvest of Wildlife on Federal Public Lands in Alaska* states,

Subsistence hunters and trappers are required to possess State hunting and trapping licenses.

Authorization for this license requirement is found in 36 CFR Ch. II (7–1–03 Edition)

§ 242.6 Licenses, permits, harvest tickets, tags, and reports. (a) *If you wish to take fish and wildlife on public lands for subsistence uses, you must be an eligible rural Alaska resident and:* (1) *Possess the pertinent valid Alaska resident hunting and trapping licenses (no license required to take fish or shellfish, but you must be an Alaska resident) unless Federal licenses are required or unless otherwise provided for in subpart D of this part;* (2) *Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent Federal permits (Federal Subsistence Registration Permit or Federal Designated Harvester Permit) required by subpart D of this part;* (3) *Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent permits, harvest tickets, or tags required by the State unless any of these documents or individual provisions in them are superseded by the requirements in subpart D of this part.*

Current Federal regulations require no license for subsistence fishing or taking of shellfish. They do require Federally-qualified subsistence users to possess State of Alaska hunting and trapping licenses.

Regulatory background. The Federal Subsistence Program's regulatory specialist, Bill Knauer, Office of Subsistence Management, provided the following background on this requirement, in response to the Council's request for information (pers. comm. 2005):

The initial intent as stated in the June 8, 1990 proposed rule was as follows "The intent of these regulations is to maximize the use of the State license system and permit system, consistent with the sound management of fish and wildlife and fulfillment of the Secretary's Title VIII responsibilities." This statement was reiterated in the June 29, 1990 final rule and an additional statement "Separate Federal licenses, permits, harvest tickets or tags will only be required where the State's requirements for licenses, permits, harvest tickets or tag conflict with the Federal government's efforts to provide for subsistence preference for rural residents on public lands." In the final rule of January 8, 1999, the statement is made "We have attempted to avoid confusion and unnecessary duplication wherever possible when establishing this program. The retention of State permits and licenses is one area where it is possible to avoid unnecessary duplication." The following statement is found in a 1996 briefing document that addressed residency and licensing requirements:

The requirement for an individual to possess a hunting or fishing license is consistent with sound management principles. The information obtained from the issuance of licenses allows managers

to estimate the hunting or fishing pressure likely to be directed at wildlife populations in certain areas. The revenues obtained from licenses directly support the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, providing for wildlife surveys, research, habitat improvement, education and information. License sales also result in millions of dollars in matching funds coming from the Federal government for the specific purpose of habitat acquisition, improvement and wildlife management.

In response to comments from John Littlefield and others, a reply to Mr. Littlefield from the Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management in late 2004/early 2005 contained the following information:

The Federal Subsistence Management Program presently requires Federally-qualified subsistence hunters to possess an Alaska resident hunting license. This requirement was established during development of the original Federal Subsistence Management Program structure. The Secretaries decided that the cost of a general hunting license (currently \$25.00 or \$5.00 in the case of a low income license) is minimal in comparison to the benefits accruing to both the subsistence user and the State. Not only is necessary user and harvest information collected from licenses, harvest tickets, and reports, but the Alaska Department of Fish and Game generates monies to conduct important wildlife studies and surveys that translate into better management of wildlife resources for all users.

The State of Alaska resident general hunting license costs \$25. There are no sport hunting licenses. All Alaska residents 16 years or older must possess a valid license to hunt. Residents 15 or younger are not required to have a license in order to hunt. Residents 65 or older may hunt with a free identification card. A resident may purchase a \$5 low income license if his family income is below \$8,200 (before taxes) or he obtained assistance during the preceding six months under any State or Federal welfare program. The monies collected from license fees go into the ADF&G budget, not the general State Treasury.

Additionally, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game receives significant Federal funds through the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Program. In 2004 this amounted to \$8,648,602 and in 2003 the amount was \$9,107,484. The apportionment is determined by a formula which considers the total area of the state and the number of licensed hunters in the state. When utilizing these funds, the state must provide at least 25 percent of project costs from a non-federal source. Projects that are eligible for funding under this program include: wildlife population management, habitat management, surveys and inventories, research, hunter/trapper education, land acquisition, etc.

In January 1996, the Federal Subsistence Board concluded that “The requirement for an individual to possess a hunting or fishing license is consistent with sound management principles. The information obtained from the issuance of licenses allows managers to estimate the hunting or fishing pressure likely to be directed at wildlife populations in certain areas.”

Council license considerations.

1. **Affected subsistence users.** Residents of Adak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Homer (and nearby communities), Juneau, Kenai (and nearby communities, Ketchikan, the Matanuska-Susitna area, the Seward area, and Valdez are presently considered non-rural places for the purposes of Federal subsistence management. All other Alaskan residents, living in approximately 220 communities, are considered rural residents and are eligible for subsistence harvesting under the Federal program (Federally-qualified users). ANILCA was written to guarantee the continuance of

cultural and social subsistence activities by members of these communities.

2. **Affected area.** Over half of Alaska's land area consists of Federal Public Land under the administration of Department of Interior or Department of Agriculture. Roughly 200 million of Alaska's 365 million acres are under Federal management. In Southeast Alaska, except for Native corporation land, limited state and municipal withdrawals, and small amounts of private land, land is administered by USDA Forest Service and DOI National Park Service, with very small amounts of land administered by other Federal agencies. Statewide, a large majority of the harvesting of land mammals by Federally-qualified subsistence users takes place on Federal Public Land. In Southeast Alaska, almost all subsistence harvesting of land mammals takes place on Federal Public Land.
3. **Rationale for adoption of State of Alaska license regulations.** The 1989 State of Alaska Supreme Court decision in the McDowell case ruled that the rural provisions of the State subsistence law were unconstitutional. This ruling meant that the State of Alaska could not comply with the ANILCA provisions requiring provision of a preference for rural subsistence users.

The expectation following this court decision was that the State of Alaska would quickly amend its constitution to comply with the rural provisions of ANILCA. The State of Alaska legislature had changed the State subsistence law to incorporate a rural preference a few years before the 1989 State Supreme Court decision. The initial actions of the Federal Subsistence Program attempted to minimize change from the State of Alaska regulatory program. Accordingly the Federal program adopted most of the State of Alaska regulations and procedures wholesale to minimize public confusion and to allow a speedy transition back to State of Alaska management of subsistence. To this end the Federal program adopted most season and harvest limit regulations, most State customary and traditional determinations and procedures, and State license requirements. Throughout the 1990s serious attempts were made to bring the State of Alaska constitution in compliance with ANILCA provisions. Since 2000, the State of Alaska has discontinued its efforts to regain management authority over subsistence through constitutional, legislative, or congressional means.

State license requirements in 1990 required that subsistence users possess a state hunting license. State regulations did not require possession of a state fishing license.

The Council believes that this initial decision was a reasonable one, given the anticipation that Federal management of subsistence in Alaska would be of very limited duration. We do not believe, however, that this temporary acquiescence to State of Alaska regulations and license requirements continues to be warranted.

4. **Current license issues.** We are now in the 17th year of Federal management of subsistence harvests on Federal public land in Alaska. All indications are that the Federal program will continue indefinitely into the future. We believe that it is appropriate to review and revise the initial Federal program decision concerning requiring Federally-qualified subsistence users to possess State of Alaska hunting licenses.
5. **ANILCA.** Nothing in the authorizing legislation requires the use of State of Alaska hunting licenses. The decision to require licenses was a Secretarial decision made during the initial organization of the Federal Subsistence Program. The Council believes that this initial decision is ripe for review and should be subject to a new Federal rulemaking.

6. **State support for ANILCA subsistence protections.** Under State of Alaska statutes, State management and regulatory actions are unable to comply with, much less actively support, the provisions of ANILCA which require subsistence protections to Federally-qualified rural residents. The 1989 State of Alaska Supreme Court decision simply does not allow a rural preference. In recent years, the State has frequently opposed the provisions season and harvest regulations that the Councils recommended as being necessary to meet subsistence needs. The State has often opposed the very limited restrictions placed on non-Federally qualified hunters and fishers that the Councils and the Federal Subsistence Board have found to be needed to allow for subsistence harvests. The State has opposed Federal provisions required by ANILCA to regulate customary trade, use of nonedible parts of subsistence harvests for handicrafts, and to allow designated hunters to provide fish and wildlife to members of their communities. This opposition to the interests of Federally-qualified subsistence users has been partially funded by the license fees these users pay to the State of Alaska.

License fees also support some construction of facilities to support hunting and fishing. These facilities may include boat ramps, viewing stations, or firing ranges. The Council believes that these facilities, partially supported by State license fees, generally are not used by nor serve the interests of rural subsistence users.

Much of the biological research undertaken to support species used for subsistence is funded directly by the Federal Subsistence Program, and much of the other data collection that documents subsistence harvests and use and supports the Federal Subsistence Program is funded directly with Federal funds. Most of this work is undertaken directly by Federal biologists working for the four Federal land management agencies and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or under Federal contract with communities, tribal government organizations, universities, other researchers, and with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Federal agencies provide about \$3,000,000 per year to the department for biological and traditional ecological knowledge studies to provide information. The fees from the State of Alaska hunting licenses required of Federally-qualified hunters do not account for a major share of funds spent on the staffing or data collection that supports the Federal Subsistence Program.

Furthermore, the Federal government provides the State of Alaska with funding to support needed liaison and coordination functions with the Federal Subsistence Program. The Federal agencies provide about \$500,000 yearly to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for these activities. These liaison and coordination functions are not funded through the use of the hunting license fees in question.

The Council respects the professional integrity and competence of Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists and anthropologists, and uses their expertise, along with the expertise of Federal, tribal, and non-government specialists, in making its recommendations. The State staff's responsibility, however, is determined by State of Alaska statutes and does not align with ANILCA requirements.

7. **Financial Implications.** The current State of Alaska license creates a financial burden on Federally-qualified subsistence users, many of whom have limited cash resources. Recent efforts by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to increase license fees would have fallen disproportionately on rural users.

State license fees are used as matching funds for Federal matching funds under Pittman-Roberts, Wallop-Boureaux, and Dingle-Johnson programs. The Federal funds come from taxes on rifles, ammunition, and other gear used by hunters. The Council believes that these uses of license fees

and taxes paid by rural hunters are not presently being used for the benefit of Federally-qualified subsistence users. The State uses these funds primarily to support programs that benefit non-Federally qualified hunters and support the State management direction, which strongly opposes the ANILCA subsistence provisions.

Remedy

The Council petitions the Secretaries to eliminate the requirement that subsistence users possess a State of Alaska hunting license. This change will require a formal rulemaking. The Council proposes a number of steps to reach this regulatory change.

1. Based on consultation with Federal staff, the regulatory change should probably be made at XXX.

Suggested wording:

(xxx) A Federal hunting license will be issued to a qualified Federal subsistence user. This license authorizes the licensee to hunt under Federal subsistence regulations on Federal Public Land. No other license is required. If hunting under this license, the user must have this license in possession while in the field.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Togiak National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 270

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

Phone 907-842-1063

Fax 907-842-5402

INFORMATION BULLETIN - August 2006

Salmon Spawning Grounds Aerial Surveys Contact: Mark Lisac

Togiak Refuge annually works cooperatively with the State to monitor salmon escapement in nearly all rivers within the refuge. Spawning grounds are surveyed from aircraft to estimate the number of chum, Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon in both the Bristol Bay and Kuskokwim Bay drainages. Survey numbers will be included in the ADF&G Commercial Fisheries annual management reports for both regions.

Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects Contact: Mark Lisac

Togiak Refuge provided support to the Native Village of Kwinhagak and ADF&G to operate salmon escapement monitoring projects on the Kanektok (FIS 04-305) and Middle Fork Goodnews Rivers (FIS 04-315). The Kanektok weir was damaged during the winter of 2005-06 and was not operational in 2006. The rail has been repaired and re-installed in the river. The panels are currently being repaired in Kwinhagak and should be ready for operation in June 2007. ADF&G has monitored Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon escapement on the Middle Fork Goodnews River since 1980. Escapement goals and management of the commercial fishery are based on salmon escapement at the weir. Togiak Refuge has worked with ADF&G since 1992 to include the coho salmon and Dolly Varden runs in the project operation. Federal subsistence fisheries funds provide operation for six weeks during the coho salmon run. Escapement numbers are preliminary at this time.

Dolly Varden Life History Studies Contact: Mark Lisac

Since 1997, Togiak Refuge has learned much about the life history of Dolly Varden in the Togiak, Goodnews and Kanektok Rivers. We have radio tagged Dolly Varden in the Togiak, Kanektok, Middle and North Forks of the Goodnews Rivers. By tracking these fish we have identified important areas for spawning and overwintering. These fish spend the winter in the drainage and return to sea during May and June. These fish may not always return to their home waters to spend the winter. In the spring of 2005 a Dolly Varden tagged in the Kanektok River in 2003 was captured in subsistence net in Kwethluk on the Kuskokwim River and another was captured in a tributary to Norton Sound. Fish tagged in the Togiak River have been recaptured in the Egegik, Kanektok, Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers. Three fish tagged during 2005 in the Goodnews River were reported captured by sport fishers in the Kanektok, Kulukak and Aniak Rivers. Reports of the findings from these various studies since 1998 are available. In 2006 we continued to work with ADF&G at the Middle Fork Goodnews River weir to monitor salmon escapement and the annual Dolly Varden runs. Preliminary results are that 1,920 Dolly Varden migrated up the MF Goodnews River. We sampled and tagged 303 of these. Dolly Varden were not sampled in the Kanektok River this year due to the weir not being in operation.

Dolly Varden Genetic Baseline Study (FIS 06-701) Contact: Mark Lisac

In 2006 Togiak Refuge, and the Conservation Genetics Laboratory initiated a 3-year study to identify discrete spawning populations of Dolly Varden in southwest Alaska using genetic analysis. Previous work in this area (FIS 00-011) have proven modern genetic techniques are reliable at identifying individual stocks between major rivers and between tributaries within a drainage. Fin samples have been collected from juvenile Dolly Varden in the Goodnews and Togiak district drainages. Prespawning adult Dolly Varden will be sampled during September 2006. ADF&G, Yukon-Delta NWR and others are providing collections from the Nushagak and Kuskokwim drainages. The collection efforts will continue in 2007.

Digital Fish Monitoring Partnership Contact: Mark Lisac

Since 1999 the USFWS has worked with the City of Dillingham and State of Alaska to restore salmon access to the local Squaw Creek drainage. In recent years more salmon have returned to this small stream. In 2005 the Service partnered with the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Nushagak Cooperative and the Dillingham Chamber of Commerce to install a weir and underwater video camera to monitor salmon escapement into the drainage and bring awareness to the importance of even the smallest watershed. The final tally was 345 pink, 261 coho, 14 chum, 10 sockeye and 18 unknown salmon, and 12 Dolly Varden. Other species observed were starry flounder, numerous juvenile salmonids, smelt, river otter and beavers. Other benefits have been a demonstration of using this technology to monitor salmon escapement, creating a partnership of local interest to foster stewardship for the local fisheries resource and providing educational opportunity for the middle and high school students participating in the BBEDC annual Aquatic Science Academy (Salmon Camp). In 2006 the BBNA Fisheries Partners Intern shared operation of this project. The equipment will continue to operate through September. Recorded video is currently being processed.

North Fork Goodnews River Rainbow Trout Population Estimate Contact: Pat Walsh

In the summer of 2005, Togiak Refuge and Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office staff conducted a population estimate of rainbow trout on the North Fork of the Goodnews River. Mark-recapture methodology was used, with fish captured and tagged by four anglers during a week-long float trip along 84 km of the river. This was followed by a second week-long float trip, during which fish were re-captured. A total of 178 rainbow trout were marked during the initial period, followed by 156 fish captured during the second period, of which 15 were recaptures. The population estimate of rainbow trout >250mm in length is 1,755 (90% confidence interval: 1,121-2,390). In summer of 2006, the survey was repeated, with similar effort and methodology. Data are currently being analyzed.

Lake Trout Stock Structure Contact: Pat Walsh

An investigation of the genetic relationships and length structure of lake trout throughout Togiak Refuge was initiated in 2004. Since summer 2004, fifteen lakes (including Middle Fork, Canyon, Kagati, Hole, Arolik, Goodnews, Ongivinuk, Tikchik, Kanuktik, Ohnlik, Nenevok, Salmon, Heart, Little Swift, Chikuminuk Lakes) were sampled for lake trout. Samples were collected from all but Ongivinuk Lake, at which no lake trout were caught. One additional lake (High Lake) will be sampled during 2006, after which the stock structure will be characterized.

Mulchatna Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with telemetry monitoring flights, composition surveys, satellite data acquisition, data entry and database management. Composition surveys in October 2005 estimated 13.9 bulls and 18.1 calves per 100 cows. The bull to cow ratio was the lowest since monitoring began in 1993 and the calf to cow ratio the second lowest. Results from the last photocensus, conducted in July 2006, are pending. The Alaska Board of Game made the following changes to caribou hunting regulations (which become effective for the 2006-2007 hunting season): 3 caribou bag limit of which only 1 caribou

may be taken August 1 – November 30; hunting season closes after March 15. Togiak Refuge will continue its involvement with this important resource.

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

We continue to conduct telemetry flights once a month and weekly during calving. Minimum production in 2006 was 66.7 calves per 100 adults. A composition survey conducted October 2005 estimated 32.4 calves and 38.2 bulls per 100 cows. The Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee will meet in October to review status reports of the population, previous hunts and revisit the Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Management Plan. The fall 2006 hunt was cancelled due to the population declining to less than 600 animals as prescribed by the Plan.

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman

Surveys conducted March 6 - 15, 2006 revealed a minimum of 1,330 moose on Togiak Refuge with the following breakdown: 64 in Unit 18 (Goodnews, Arolik, and Kanektok drainages), 1,023 in Unit 17A (Tvativak Bay west to and including the Osviak drainage) and 243 in Unit 17C (Youth and Killian Creeks, Weary, Igushik, Tuklung and Ongoke drainages). The previous high count of 25 moose in Unit 18 occurred in 2005. The previous high count of 777 moose in Unit 17A occurred in 2004. Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with moose surveys in the western portion of Unit 17B. The total population estimate for 2006 was 1,210 +/- 120 moose and is very similar to the 2001 estimate of 1,202 +/- 141 moose. Hunters reported taking 3 bulls during the Unit 17A/17C winter hunt.

In 2006, 32 radiocollared moose produced a minimum of 35 calves (109.4 calves per 100 cows) which included 2 sets of triplets. This ratio is below the long term average of 136.2 calves per 100 cows, however, we likely missed some calves due to a rapid green-up.

Beaver Contact: Michael Winfree

Togiak Refuge completed beaver cache surveys along thirteen selected rivers on the refuge in October 2005. Cache numbers in 2005 are within the range of historical surveys. In 2005, 460 caches were tallied in surveys covering 417 river miles. Survey results for 2005 resulted in average cache per river mile values of 0.8 for Unit 17A, 1.6 for Unit 17C and 1.6 for Unit 18.

Walrus Contact: Rob MacDonald

In 2006, Togiak Refuge walrus haulouts were monitored from both ground-based observation points and by aerial survey. Ground-based observations of the Cape Peirce walrus haulouts were conducted from May 5 to August 24 with a peak count of 41 animals.

Two aerial surveys of the Togiak Refuge walrus haulouts were conducted on January 13 to February 21. No walrus were observed at Cape Peirce or Hagemeister Island. Walrus numbers at Cape Newenham ranged from 0-313 animals.

In response to an unusual walrus mortality event in mid October 2005, staff erected a snow fence between the walrus haulout and the cliff tops. It is hoped the fence will rebuild a sand dune and prevent further access, and mortalities, to the cliff tops. During the 2006 summer, about two feet of wind blown sand was deposited around the fence.

Seals Contact: Rob MacDonald

In 2006, Togiak Refuge seal haulouts were monitored from both ground-based observation points and by aerial survey. Ground-based observations of the Nanvak Bay seal haulouts were conducted from May 6 to August 23 with a peak count of 493 animals.

Two aerial surveys of the Togiak Refuge seal haulouts were conducted on January 13 and February 21. No seals were observed on Nanvak Bay or Hagemeister Island haulouts.

Steller Sea Lions Contact: Rob MacDonald

Two aerial surveys of the Steller sea lion haulout at Cape Newenham were conducted in January and February resulting in counts of 35 and 37 animals.

Seabirds Contact: Rob MacDonald

In 2006, Togiak Refuge staff monitored the population and productivity of black-legged kittiwakes, common murre, and pelagic cormorants at Cape Peirce. Although the data is still preliminary, the population counts of each species were low. However, productivity data appears to be about average.

In conjunction with the Seabird Tissue Archival and Monitoring Project, Togiak Refuge staff collected seabird eggs for contaminants analysis. Glaucous-winged gull eggs were collected from Kikertalik Lake and Ualik Lake.

Other Bird Projects Contact: Rob MacDonald

Togiak Refuge continued several other bird monitoring projects including: owl surveys; bald eagle nest productivity surveys; harlequin duck breeding pair surveys; and 3 public bird counts.

Eelgrass Monitoring Contact: Michael Winfree

Togiak Refuge is investigating monitoring methods for eelgrass bed distribution along Bristol Bay and Kuskokwim Bay coastlines. Eelgrass beds are one of the more productive habitats along refuge coastlines, and play an important role in the health of the ecosystem. Waterfowl, fish, and invertebrates directly and indirectly depend on eelgrass beds along Togiak Refuge's coastline. In August 2006 staff confirmed the presence of eelgrass in beds that were photographed in 2005.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Pat Walsh

During 2006, Togiak Refuge personnel continued to collect and monitor water temperature in 17 rivers within the Togiak Refuge. Water temperature monitoring will provide vital data that can be used for assessing fish growth, water quality, and long term environmental change.

Oral History and Traditional Knowledge Gathering Contact: Mark Lisac

Togiak Refuge initiated a study in 2002 to document TEK from village and tribal elders throughout the refuge. This is a cooperative project between Togiak Refuge, Office of Subsistence Management, Bristol Bay Native Association, and the local Village Councils. In 2004 this project was funded by OSM to gather fisheries specific information in the Kuskokwim Region of the Refuge. Elders in Quinhagak (4) and Goodnews Bay (2) have shared their life stories and detailed information about individual species, habitat and environmental changes observed over time. Translated interviews are entered into a text searchable and GIS database. This project is now a cooperative project with BBNA through OSM funding of the Partners positions program. Final analysis and a draft report were completed in late February 2006. OSM has reviewed and provided edits to the draft. A final draft report will be presented to the Village Councils before the report and databases will be released for public viewing.

Education and Outreach Contact: Allen Miller

Togiak Refuge has an active education and outreach program including the Migratory Bird Calendar and Junior Duck Stamp contests; National Wildlife Refuge Week and National Fishing Week activities; career fairs; production of Bristol Bay Field Notes, aired three times weekly on KDLG; and numerous classroom presentations in 12 villages in the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, and Dillingham City school

districts. Field trips with area students in 2006 included bird walks, pond life investigations, bear safety, and plants. The refuge website is also a valuable education tool and is available at <http://togiak.fws.gov>.

The refuge partners with others to conduct three environmental education camps described below. Unfortunately the Riparian Ecosystem and Outdoor Skills Camp had to be cancelled this year due to several days of poor flying conditions. That was the first time one of the camps has been cancelled due to weather.

Southwest Alaska Science Academy Contact: Allen Miller

The Refuge helped with the 6th year of a summer camp aimed at teaching middle and high school students about fisheries science and the importance of salmon to our ecosystem. Students were selected from the Bristol Bay region. During the camp students worked in the field alongside fisheries professionals. Cooperators with the refuge on this project included the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute, University of Alaska, University of Washington School of Fisheries, the Dillingham City and Southwest Region school districts, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Cape Peirce Marine Mammal and Yup'ik Culture Camp Contact: Allen Miller

Students who participated at the 14th annual Cape Peirce camp learned about marine mammal and seabird biology by helping field biologists conduct monitoring and behavioral studies of walruses, harbor and spotted seals, and seabirds. Students and agency staff learned about traditional Yup'ik uses of animals and plants; and about Native survival skills. This program helps students gain an understanding of the biological diversity of the marine ecosystem, and to strengthen their sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Riparian Ecosystem and Outdoor Skills Camp Contact: Allen Miller

Students learn about river ecosystems and how to enjoy them safely and responsibly. Students observe and learn about many fish, wildlife and plant species during a float trip. The camp includes snorkel observations of fish in their natural habitat; helping Refuge fisheries staff collect Dolly Varden and observe them surgically implant radio transmitters, and using receivers to track the fish. Participants prepare meals with collected fish, and identify medicinal plants. This program helps students understand the biological diversity of riparian ecosystems and the importance of salmon as a nutrient source. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

River Ranger Program Contact: Allen Miller

Two River Rangers were stationed in the village of Togiak during summer 2006. Both rangers were Togiak Residents. A second crew rotated between the Kanektok and Goodnews rivers. Rangers on the latter two rivers used inflatable kayaks in addition to motorboats (which have been used since the program started). Use of kayaks allowed rangers to access the entire length of the Kanektok and Goodnews rivers. One of the second crew was a student-intern from Togiak, hired through a cooperative program with the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation. The Refuge River Ranger Program was conceived during the public use management planning process and was first implemented in 1991. The program serves many purposes. River Rangers are the main contact source for sport fishermen and local residents. Information distributed to the public includes Service policies, regulations, resource management practices, State sport fish regulations, bear safety, wilderness ethics, leave-no-trace camping, and information about private lands to prevent trespass. Rangers document public use occurring on the river along with the location and timing of activities, conflicts between users, and sport fish catch/harvest

per unit effort. Rangers also assist Refuge and ADF&G staff at the Kanektok River and Middle Fork Goodnews River weirs, and assist Refuge staff with breeding bird surveys on all three rivers. In addition, they patrol campsites for litter, monitor compliance of sport fishing guides, and offer assistance as needed.

Staff Changes:

In March 2006, Pilot/Law Enforcement Officer Mike Hinkes accepted a similar position with the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge based out of Fairbanks. Since arriving in 1991, Mike flew the majority of Togiak Refuge missions, supervised the wildlife and fisheries programs until 2000 when he became a law enforcement officer. Galen Howell, Park Ranger with Noatak National Preserve, based in Kotzebue, has been selected to fill Mike's position. Wildlife Biologist/Pilot Rob MacDonald accepted a similar position with Migratory Bird Management in Juneau. Rob worked for Togiak Refuge as a Fisheries Biological Technician (1992-98), Wildlife Biologist (1998-06) and became a Service Pilot in 2003.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

CHARTER

1. **Official Designation:** Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.
2. **Objectives and Scope of Activity:** The objective of the Council is to provide an administrative structure that enables residents of the region who have personal knowledge of local conditions and requirements to have a meaningful role in the management of fish and wildlife and of subsistence uses of those resources on public lands in the region.
3. **Period of Time Necessary for the Council's Activities and Termination Date:** The Council is expected to exist into the foreseeable future. Its continuation is, however, subject to rechartering every biennial anniversary of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of December 2, 1980. The Council will take no action unless the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act have been complied with.
4. **Official to Whom the Council Reports:** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
5. **Support Services:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council.
6. **Duties of the Council:** The Council possesses the authority to perform the following duties:
 - a. Initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decision making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region.
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the region.
 - (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines and regulations to implement the strategy.

- e. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
- f. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
- g. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
- h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.

The Council will perform its duties in conformity with the Regional Council Operations Manual.

- 7. **Estimated Operating Costs:** Annual operating costs of the Council are estimated at \$100,000, which includes one person-year of staff support.
- 8. **Meetings:** The Council will meet at least twice each year at the call of the Council, Council Chair, Federal Subsistence Board Chair, or Designated Federal Officer with the advance approval of the Federal Subsistence Board Chair and the Designated Federal Officer, who will also approve the agenda.
- 9. **Membership:** The Council's membership is as follows:

Thirteen members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the region represented by the Council. To ensure that a diversity of interests is represented, it is the goal that nine of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the region and four of the members (30 percent) represent commercial or sport interests within the region.

The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations of the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Vacancy: Whenever a vacancy occurs among Council members appointed under paragraph 9, the Secretary will appoint an individual in accordance with paragraph 9 to fill that vacancy for the remainder of the applicable term.

Terms of Office: Except as provided herein, each member of the Council will serve a 3-year term with the term ending on December 2 of the appropriate year unless a member of the Council resigns prior to the expiration of the 3-year term or he/she is removed for cause by the Secretary upon recommendation of the Federal Subsistence Board. Members will be notified of their appointment in writing. If resigning prior to the expiration of a term, members will provide a written resignation.

Election of Officers: Council members will elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary for a 1-year term.

Removal of Members: If a Council member appointed under paragraph 9 has two consecutive unexcused absences of regularly scheduled meetings, the Chair of the Federal Subsistence Board may recommend that the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture remove that individual. A member may also be removed due to misconduct.

Compensation: Members of the Council will receive no compensation as members. Members will, however, be allowed travel expenses, including per diem, in the same manner as persons

employed intermittently in government service are allowed such expenses under 5 U.S.C. 5703.

10. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members:** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter including a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct financial interest.
11. **Designated Federal Officer or Employee:** Pursuant to Section 10(e) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Designated Federal Officer will be the Federal Regional Coordinator or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director - Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
12. **Authority:** The Council is reestablished by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)).

/sgd/ Gale A. Norton
Secretary of the Interior

October 25, 2005
Date Signed

October 27, 2005
Date Filed

Winter 2007 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window**

February 19–March 23, 2007 current as of 8/18/06

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb 11</i>	<i>Feb 12</i>	<i>Feb 13</i>	<i>Feb 14</i>	<i>Feb 15</i>	<i>Feb 16</i>	<i>Feb 17</i>
<i>Feb 18</i>	<i>Feb 19 Meeting Window Opens PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY</i>	<i>Feb 20</i>	<i>Feb 21</i>	<i>Feb 22</i>	<i>Feb 23</i>	<i>Feb 24</i>
		SP—Nome				
		BB—Naknek				
<i>Feb 25</i>	<i>Feb 26</i>	<i>Feb 27</i>	<i>Feb 28</i>	<i>Mar 1</i>	<i>Mar 2</i>	<i>Mar 3</i>
				NS—Barrow		
		SE—Kake				
<i>Mar 4</i>	<i>Mar 5</i>	<i>Mar 6</i>	<i>Mar 7</i>	<i>Mar 8</i>	<i>Mar 9</i>	<i>Mar 10</i>
		WI—Aniak		NWA—Kotzebue		
<i>Mar 11</i>	<i>Mar 12</i>	<i>Mar 13</i>	<i>Mar 14</i>	<i>Mar 15</i>	<i>Mar 16</i>	<i>Mar 17</i>
	KA—King Cove*			YKD—Hooper Bay		
		SC—Anchorage				
<i>Mar 18</i>	<i>Mar 19</i>	<i>Mar 20</i>	<i>Mar 21</i>	<i>Mar 22</i>	<i>Mar 23 Meeting Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar 24</i>
		EI—Tok				

*Cold Bay alternate location for K/A

**Kenai Peninsula dates and location to be announced.

Fall 2007 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window

August 27-October 19, 2006 current as of 9-8-06

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug 26	Aug 27 FISH CYCLE MEETING WINDOW OPENS	Aug 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sept. 1
		NS - Barrow				
Sept. 2	Sept. 3 Holiday	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 6	Sept. 7	Sept. 8
Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15
Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 19	Sept. 20	Sept. 21	Sept. 22
Sept. 23	Sept. 24	Sept. 25	Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29
Sept. 30 END OF FY 2006	Oct. 1 BEGINNING OF FY2007	Oct. 2	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6
Oct. 7	Oct. 8 Holiday	Oct. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 11	Oct. 12	Oct. 13
Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19 FISH CYCLE MEETING WINDOW CLOSES Wildlife Proposal Period Ends	Oct. 20